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CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION IN
AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

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PREFACE

THE present work is a revision of one of the Council's earliest publications, *Primary Education by Correspondence*, together with chapters tracing the origin and growth of secondary and tertiary education by correspondence in Australia, and a chapter on the work of the New Zealand correspondence school. Only publicly supported institutions, i.e., those controlled by the Australian governments and universities, are treated in detail here; there are also a number of private correspondence agencies, mainly specialising in accountancy and other commercial courses.

The present volume would not have been possible without the co-operation of many people. The Directors of Education and their officers supplied a great deal of information, read the first draft of the collated material, pointed to omissions and suggested improvements. Mr. A. J. Betheras, Inspector of Correspondence Training in the Department of Labour and National Service, assisted similarly in the chapter on technical correspondence schools. To Dr. A. G. Butchers, headmaster of the New Zealand correspondence school, we are indebted for the chapter on New Zealand. Unpublished theses by Mr. M. Bone and Mr. L. B. Carter on correspondence education in South Australia and Queensland respectively proved helpful. University officers provided details of the facilities available for external students, and the Correspondence Sunday Schools provided far more information than it was possible for us to use. The assistance received from these and many more sources is greatly appreciated.

I should also like to thank Mr. Finigan, headmaster of Blackfriars, Mr. Pridgeon, headmaster of the Victorian correspondence school, and Miss Sagasser, headmistress of the Tasmanian correspondence school, for the courtesy shown to members of my staff visiting their schools and Mr. Zerner, headmaster of the Queensland primary correspondence school for the very full replies he gave to the many questions he received.

February, 1949

K. S. CUNNINGHAM,

Director

CONDITIONS GIVING RISE TO CORRESPONDENCE INSTRUCTION

The Australian Educational System

In providing educational facilities for the outback, as the Australian hinterland is called, the most important factor has been the mode of organisation of the State education departments. As education is a responsibility of the State governments, the Commonwealth is divided into six independent educational units. Within each State there is a marked degree of centralization.¹ Under a permanent head, known as the Director of Education, the educational facilities provided by the State are organised and controlled from the capital city of the State concerned. Each Education Department selects, trains,² appoints, pays and promotes its own teachers. It decides when and where schools are to be built and closed. It lays down a curriculum in all schools controlled by the Department, a curriculum which is usually followed closely by private schools. It maintains a corps of inspectors who regularly visit and report upon all schools in the section of the State allotted to them. Through its inspectors, it exercises a certain amount of oversight over private schools to see that they maintain a reasonable standard of efficiency and comply with the conditions relating to compulsory attendance. These and many other features are common to all the State Departments of Education. There are, of course, differences, but considering that the various systems grew up independently — though not without mutual influence — their general similarity is remarkable. On the whole, the administration of public education in Australia presents a striking picture of uniformity of general plan.

In educational literature centralization has often been condemned; whilst there can be no doubt that there are some directions in which educational decentralization is increasingly desirable; it seems that no system could have served so well in maintaining a reasonably good standard of general education during the pioneering work of opening up a new continent. In countries where the provision of educational facilities was left to local control, the adequacy of the facilities made available naturally depended on the financial and social status of the com-

¹ The appointment of regional directors in New South Wales and Queensland indicates a current trend towards decentralization.

² In Tasmania teachers are now trained by the university.

munity concerned. Undeveloped and rural areas could not offer salaries as high as those paid in the cities, and hence, in some other countries, they received the poorer teachers. The Australian system makes it possible to spread educational opportunities more uniformly. In particular, the Education Department has the right to appoint the teachers of a State school in any part of the State. In the courses provided at the teachers' colleges, special emphasis is placed on training for rural school work, and, apart from those training for secondary teaching or for work as specialists, such trainees expect early appointments to be to one-teacher schools, perhaps hundreds of miles away from the capital city.

The Standard of Rural Education

There are naturally some differences in the content of the subjects of study in rural and city schools, but investigations have shown that rural school courses in the basic subjects are of a relatively high standard. Cunningham and Price,¹ when standardizing their arithmetic tests, found no tendency for the performance of children to decrease with the size of the school. On tests of silent reading, on the other hand, McIntyre and Wood² found a definite tendency in all States for children in small schools to do less well than those who attended large schools. However, they pointed out that the differences should be treated with caution since, in most States, rural children commenced their schooling later than city children. The teaching in country schools appears even more favourable if the above test results are interpreted in the light of findings on intelligence test performance.³ On both verbal and non-verbal tests, the city and small-town children in all States in the three age bands 10-12 years had higher mean scores, a tendency which the author regarded as being statistically significant. It seems certain that, if city children do reach a higher standard than country children in the basic subjects, these differences are less than have been reported from other countries and may be due to the slightly superior ability of the city group.

The Distribution of Population

Australia is in the paradoxical position of being a highly urbanised yet thinly populated country. According to the census of 1947, over one-half of the Australian population of seven and a half million people reside in the six capital cities. Another

¹ *The Standardization of an Australian Arithmetic Test*, M.U.P., 1934.

² *The Standardization of an Australian Reading Test*, M.U.P., 1935.

³ G. A. McIntyre, *The Standardization of Intelligence Tests in Australia*, M.U.P., 1938.

eighteen per cent. of the people live in the provincial cities and towns, the largest of which, Newcastle, has a population exceeding 127,000 people. As the average number of persons per square mile is only two and a half, it will be realised how sparsely many parts of this continent are settled. The Australian States vary greatly in their size and in their population. They vary as well in their stage of economic development and in their possession of desert areas which can support no population or only a very scattered one.

TABLE I
DENSITY OF POPULATION

State	Area in Sq. Miles	Persons per Sq. Mile	% Rural and Migratory
Western Australia	975,920	.5	35
Queensland	670,500	1.65	40
South Australia	380,070	1.7	31
New South Wales	309,433	9.65	28
Victoria	87,884	25.4	29
Tasmania	25,215	9.8	42
Australia (including Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory)	2,974,581	2.55	31

These figures are from the Census Bulletin No. 1 (1948) prepared by the Commonwealth Statistician. The "rural" population consists of all persons not living in incorporated cities or towns. In no State does the percentage of migratory population reach one per cent.

The figures in Table 1 may be misleading unless they are read in conjunction with population maps. The south-eastern corner of South Australia is, relatively speaking, closely settled, while the desert regions of the north and west contain large areas in which settlement is, at present, impossible. This is reflected in the percentage of the rural population. Although the percentage of the rural population is similar in Tasmania and Queensland, the former contains many farming pockets in the valleys and the latter many isolated pastoral workers spread over the western plains. These factors influence the organisation of education.

Educational Facilities in Rural Australia

Most of Australia's country children are still educated in small schools. In spite of the consolidation of schools¹ and the exten-

¹ In Western Australia the number of primary schools dropped from 822 in 1940 to 517 at the end of 1947. The Department attributes this largely to consolidation of schools.

sion of school transport services there remains a high proportion of small rural schools in Australia. Queensland, with some 1,500 primary schools, had over 1,000 one-teacher schools in 1946. In Tasmania, where there has been extensive consolidation, there were 196 schools out of a total of 332 primary and area schools with an average attendance of fewer than 45 pupils. In all States there remains a high percentage of one-teacher schools.

Many methods have been, and still are, used for carrying educational facilities into outlying districts where the population is too scattered to support a school. In some States, where there are two small schools, each below the attendance necessary for maintaining a teacher, but sufficiently close to be visited in turn by the one teacher, they are opened on a part-time basis. All States provide a travelling allowance to the parents of children who reside beyond a specified distance from a school; the minimum distance varies, but is usually three miles. Some States provide boarding subsidies to permit children to live in towns and attend school or to allow two or more parents to obtain the services of a teacher approved by the Education Department. In earlier years Education Departments employed itinerant teachers, who visited in turn a number of homes in outlying districts, spent a few days at each, gave the children some instruction and left them a number of lessons to prepare before their next visit. During recent years, however, the successful development of correspondence tuition has not only extended educational facilities to thousands of children previously without them, but is gradually replacing some of the methods mentioned above.

Tuition by Correspondence

Certain forms of correspondence tuition have been well known and widely used for many years. The world over, universities and private agencies have developed correspondence courses for students who have already attained a good standard of general education; but it seems that Australia can claim to be the first country to have shown in a systematic way, and on a large scale, that it was possible to provide by correspondence a complete primary and secondary education for children who had never been to school.¹

Victoria and New South Wales were first in the field of

¹ The report of the conference on Supervised Correspondence Study (International Textbook Company, 1934) states that correspondence tuition was early provided in the U.S.A. by universities and private correspondence schools but that one of the first uses of correspondence courses in a public school system was in Victoria

primary correspondence work. Both helped other States to initiate similar schemes, which each State has varied to suit its own particular needs. Correspondence education at the primary level has now passed from the experimental stage to that of a definitely established educational facility.

Correspondence courses at the secondary level have developed from two sources: the need to educate teachers, and the desire of some who had finished the primary course to continue their studies. In the early years of this century many pupils who had completed their primary courses joined the Education Departments as pupil-teachers. They taught by day and continued their education at night to complete the academic courses that were a pre-requisite to promotion. To help young people stationed in isolated rural areas some States provided courses to matriculation level. The Victorian scheme, begun in 1910, was the first. In several States secondary tuition by correspondence was reserved for teachers, but the higher educational standard required of entrants to the teaching profession has lessened this need and, with the demand of the armed services for correspondence tuition during the war years, the courses were thrown open to all.

During the late twenties and early thirties the worth of the existing primary courses was apparent; pupils who had completed the primary course had expressed a desire for further education and there were also pupils in the upper grades of the smallest rural schools ready to use post-primary courses. The secondary courses were developed and extended until now, in any State, it is possible for a pupil to receive a complete secondary education by correspondence.

At other levels the conditions giving rise to correspondence classes were similar to those which occurred in all parts of the world where more mature students wished to gain qualifications by examination but could not, or did not wish to, attend classes. There are many reasons why men and women seek correspondence courses, among them ill-health, family and social duties, business and the necessity of earning a living, as well as distance from classes. In all secondary classes there are usually some students who prefer to receive lecture notes which they can study at leisure in their homes rather than to attend a course of lectures. Formerly the State correspondence schools would not accept those able to attend classes, but this practice has been abandoned by the technical correspondence schools in dealing with ex-servicemen, and the practice may spread. The number of students who were prepared to pay the higher fees of the private correspondence schools shows the popularity of the method, and it is not impossible that the large enrolments of

the technical correspondence schools are in part due to the availability of their courses to city students.

During the following chapters the work of the primary and secondary correspondence schools will be considered together. In all States except Queensland they are housed in the same building and are under a common headmaster. The dividing line between the two is often narrow and varies from State to State according to the usual age of transfer. Although both technical and teachers' correspondence classes offer academic courses similar to those of the secondary school, their functions are sufficiently clear-cut to enable them to be treated separately. Historically, technical and adult correspondence courses are relatively late developments and will be treated in a later chapter

II

THE HISTORY OF CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION

In May 1914, the Victorian Education Department received a letter from a settler in Beech Forest, living eight miles from the nearest school. In this letter he enquired, "Can anything be done for the education of my two boys?" The Chief Inspector referred the request to Mr. J. McRae, Vice-Principal of the Teachers' College, in the hope that he might be able to arrange for some of the students in training to send lessons by post. As a result, five students volunteered to try the plan of teaching the boys by correspondence. Each one undertook responsibility for certain subjects. Sets of work for each fortnight were prepared and regularly posted. The children were instructed in the ordinary subjects of the curriculum, including the making of systematic observations of weather phenomena and of plant and animal life. At the end of the year the boys attended the nearest school and sat successfully for the annual school examination. In the following year their instruction was continued in the same way, and a younger brother of five was added to the class.

This development marks the beginning of correspondence education for primary school children in Australia. As will be seen below, secondary correspondence courses were initiated in Victoria as early as 1910, but these were designed solely for departmental student teachers.

As other cases came before the Department, the Chief Inspector referred them to the Melbourne Teachers' College. Mr. McRae took a keen interest in the new method and closely supervised the work of the students. It was mainly due to his enthusiasm that the experiment was continued successfully. By March, 1916, the number of children enrolled had increased and the work became too much for trainee teachers. Arrangements were consequently made for most of the work to be carried out by certain members of the staff of the Faraday Street school, who were relieved from some of their other duties. On 23 July 1917, a full-time teacher was appointed to conduct the correspondence work.

Similar work had begun independently in New South Wales. At the beginning of 1916, Mr. S. H. Smith, then Inspector of Continuation Schools, and later Director of Education for New South Wales, personally undertook to teach by post a little boy in the north-west of the State, whose mother sent in an urgent plea for continuance of his education, which had been interrup-

ted through the closing of a subsidised school. As this work proved successful, Mr. Smith undertook the tuition of other isolated children in his spare time. The work grew so rapidly that by October, 1916, Mr. Smith found it necessary to arrange for the appointment of a teacher, Mr. W. A. Carter, to carry out the work. By the beginning of 1917, 27 children from 11 families were enrolled; from then on the school grew apace.

The following are the dates on which the various Education Departments officially began primary correspondence work:—

Victoria	1914, by teacher trainees 1916, by teachers
New South Wales	1916
Western Australia	1918
Tasmania	1919
South Australia	1920
Queensland	1922

As these schools grew at different rates, the progress of each will be treated separately.

New South Wales: During the eight years following the establishment of correspondence lessons four separate "schools" were set up to meet the needs of a rapidly increasing number of pupils. The second of these was opened on 1st July, 1918, at Head Office, under Mr. Walter Finigan. These schools were housed in vacant parts of existing Sydney schools, but with the continued increase in numbers, all four schools were consolidated at Blackfriars in 1924, with Mr. Finigan in charge.

The growth in numbers during these early years is shown in Table II.

TABLE IIA

ENROLMENTS IN N.S.W. PRIMARY CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS AT THE END OF EACH SCHOOL YEAR

Year	Number Enrolled
1918	108
1919	190
1920	586
1921	1,040
1922	1,627
1923	1,975
1924	2,294
1925	2,555
1926	3,018

TABLE IIB
NUMBER OF NEW SOUTH WALES
CORRESPONDENCE TEACHERS

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Teachers</i>
1916	1
1920	12
1925	60

As some pupils who had satisfactorily completed the primary course wished to continue their education, secondary classes were started in 1923. In small country schools there were many pupils who were anxious to continue their studies beyond the primary level, but who, for financial or other reasons, were unable to attend a centre where secondary education was provided. It was felt that parents would continue to send their children to the small country school for a further twelve months if they could obtain instruction beyond the primary stage. As the teacher at these schools was already required to attend to pupils of all grades, the task of providing super-primary instruction unaided would have been burdensome. To overcome this difficulty lesson sheets in English, geography, arithmetic, mensuration and farm book-keeping were sent to those schools where an enrolment of at least two post-primary pupils was guaranteed. In the first year pupils in 513 schools and 1,396 pupils continued their education in this way. In 1947 leaflets in a wide range of subjects, including languages and practical subjects, were sent to 800 schools.

When the prices of Australian primary products tumbled during the depression, many outback settlers could no longer afford to send their children to the high schools or boarding schools in the towns. Consequently, in 1931, a secondary department of the correspondence school was organised and distinct courses were provided for students seeking a general secondary course in the post-primary school, and for those whose aim was the academic secondary course leading to an examination certificate. During the next eight years leaflet courses to Intermediate Certificate standard¹ were provided in nine subjects. In 1934, there were 1,750 pupils in small country schools receiving the leaflets of the correspondence school, and, of these, 115 were in the 9th grade, the Intermediate Certificate year. In the same year 392 pupils were receiving tuition through the secondary

¹ An external examination taken after three years in High School. The average age of candidates would be about fifteen years.

department of the correspondence school. Of these, only 7 sat for the Intermediate Certificate examination. In 1938, when 687 were enrolled with the secondary department, only 22 sought the Certificate. It seems that the aim of passing an examination was not allowed to dominate correspondence school work.

A memorable event on 1 July 1939 was the celebration, attended by 300 guests, held to mark the twenty-first anniversary of Mr. Finigan's appointment to the correspondence school. Parents and ex-pupils who were unable to attend in person forwarded letters stating what the correspondence school meant to them and to the people outback; there was a public exhibition of pupils' work containing corrected exercise books, drawings and photographs, handwork and applied art; students with poetical leanings had composed words for a song appropriate to the occasion, and others, artistically inclined, had designed the place cards which adorned the official table. The co-operation and interest of pupils and ex-pupils were a tribute to the work of the school.

Victoria: After the establishment of the primary correspondence school in 1916 its growth was steady, and it became necessary to transfer the school first to Bell Street and later, in 1932, to its present site in Napier Street, Fitzroy. There it was combined with the sections providing secondary, teachers' and needlework classes that had previously been conducted independently.

The secondary correspondence school began in 1910, when work was sent by the staff of Melbourne High School to junior teachers in country districts who were unable to obtain suitable instruction in the subjects necessary for their training. The facilities available were extended to pupils other than junior teachers and thus the secondary section of correspondence tuition developed.

No figures are available to illustrate the early growth of correspondence education, but development in later years is indicated in the following enrolment figures.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>
1924	300	(*)
1928	622	1417
1932	1185	1501
1935	1149	1644

* No records available.

During the past ten years there has been a slow drop in the numbers of both primary and secondary enrolments.

Queensland — Primary: The Queensland Primary Correspondence School was opened on 1 February 1922, with 38 pupils and one teacher. The teacher had been asked by the then Director, Mr. B. McKenna, to visit Blackfriars while in Sydney and to investigate the methods used there. On her return she was deputed to begin the tuition of primary pupils by correspondence.

The first pupils came from schools which had been closed through low attendance, but before the end of the year 796 pupils had been enrolled; within a year the staff had increased to fourteen and a part-time supervisor had been appointed. In 1923, the first full-time supervisor was appointed. The position was held by Mr. J. Bensted until his retirement in 1938, when he was succeeded by Mr. W. A. Zerner, who retired early in 1949.

For the first ten years of its existence the school had no permanent home. The first lessons were despatched from a back room in the Brisbane Technical College; as staff and enrolments continued to increase the location of the school was repeatedly changed. The first change was to the Old Trades Hall; then, in turn, the school occupied rooms in three other old city buildings until it moved into its present premises in College Road in 1932.

By the close of 1933 the number of pupils was 5,816 and the staff numbered one hundred teachers. Since that time the school's enrolment has usually been between five and six thousand; during the years 1942-3 the enrolment passed the seven thousand mark, and, in addition, lessons were supplied to children in northern cities, where, owing to war precautions, the schools were closed for some months.

During the past fifteen years the Queensland primary correspondence school has reached stability in numbers and location, and its history has been the story of improvements in methods and material.

Queensland — Secondary: Secondary correspondence tuition had been established in Queensland in 1913. At the beginning of the century the practice was to appoint, as pupil teachers, students aged fourteen years who had completed the primary course. To secure promotion it was necessary for them to pass examinations in educational and general academic subjects. As many of these teachers were stationed in isolated rural schools, courses for the teachers' Class III examination and for the University of Queensland matriculation examination were prepared for those unable to attend classes.

Originally the department was administered by a supervisor

with part-time assistance from members of the technical college staff. Later full-time teachers were appointed.

In 1919, classes for the Teachers' Class II examination began and about the same time the despatch of papers in Book-keeping and Accountancy was undertaken. In 1922, the Correspondence Tuition Department was transferred to the teachers' training college, courses in commercial subjects were discontinued, and enrolment in other courses was confined to teachers, a restriction that was not removed till 1935.

As many applications for assistance were received from those desiring to study for the Junior Public Examination, instruction papers were prepared in eight subjects, namely, English, Arithmetic, Geography, History, Algebra, Geometry, Latin, French, and later in Book-keeping and Shorthand.

In February, 1943, scholarship-holders and those granted extension scholarships were admitted to the Junior and Matriculation courses, respectively, without the payment of fees. Thus, the State now provides free secondary instruction in all its stages by correspondence, subject to the usual conditions in regard to attainments.

During the war years these courses were made available to members of the forces who wished to continue their studies, and, since the conclusion of hostilities, the facilities have been used in the reconstruction training schemes.

*South Australia:*¹ The correspondence school officially came into existence on 24 May 1920, but the work had commenced in 1918 when Miss Lydia Longmore, the departmental inspector of infant schools, with a band of volunteer teachers, began to assist outback children with their lessons. Lessons were set, exercises were corrected, and parcels of story books were sent. Even during 1918 the work penetrated to the inland points of Eyre Peninsula, along the camel tracks of the far north and eastward towards the Queensland border. With 121 children from 52 families, the scheme was beyond the scope of voluntary effort.

In 1920 Miss S. N. Twiss was appointed head teacher of the correspondence school with a staff of three assistants. The school was housed in a room in the Education Department offices. In the following year the school was moved to Kintore Avenue, where it remained until 1928. The rooms were more commodious, but their condition was poor; on one occasion the school was flooded after a heavy downpour.

¹ Much of this information has been derived from a thesis by Mr. Bone held in the library of the School of Education of the University of Melbourne.

The school continued to expand. In 1926, 842 children were enrolled, and the staff included the headmistress, ten assistants and three typists; in 1932 there were 1,575 pupils and the staff included one chief assistant, 24 assistants and four typists. In these early days many people far past the school leaving age were taking advantage of the opportunity to become literate, and the pupils included youths of 15 and 16 years and a returned soldier who were learning to read and write.

In 1925 patients confined to the Children's Hospital were given lessons by correspondence; here women graduates and undergraduates volunteered to act as supervisors. After a year's experience the supervisors gained confidence in teaching, and although, for several years, the printed lessons were provided, no work was submitted for correction to the Correspondence School, and ultimately the Children's Hospital School was established.

In the following year the work of the school was extended to ex-South Australian children in places as far away as Bengal and the Malay States. It also assisted teachers of small schools and the instructor at the Magill Reformatory. A successful experiment was the giving of correspondence lessons to children who were declared on various psychological grounds to be unfit to attend ordinary school.

In 1925, two activities were added to foster a corporate spirit among the scattered homes served by the school. The children were encouraged to purchase books to form the nucleus of a library which, by 1929, contained 2,024 volumes; the head teacher conducted a reading circle which discussed the books read. The second activity was the preparation of a 'household economy' page, which was sent to each family represented on the rolls.

In their turn, the parents expressed their gratitude for the service which the school was rendering them. They contributed funds towards the school library and showed their appreciation of the teachers' work by varied gifts. (At one time each member of the staff had a handsome fox fur presented by her pupils).

The success of the primary courses had created a demand for secondary correspondence tuition. In 1929, a super-primary class was formed to teach English Literature, Drawing, Needlework and Applied Arts. Fifty girls over the age of 14 years were enrolled. In the following year, in the middle of the depression, a course of eight subjects to Intermediate level was introduced.

In 1928 the school moved into one room of the Currie Street Practising School, and in the following year it again shifted, this time to the Gilles Street Practising School. Following the retire-

ment of Miss Twiss in 1931, the headmaster of the Practising School, as a measure of economy, was appointed to her place in addition to his normal duties; a chief assistant became the senior member of the correspondence school staff. This arrangement continued until 1936, when a separate head mistress was made responsible for the direct administration of the school, under the general supervision of the headmaster of the Practising School.

By this time pupils of the school were to be found throughout the mid-continent. One little girl learnt her lessons while she travelled with her father in the far north; another worked her exercises in the family dug-out on the opal fields; few schools can boast of a Grade I pupil who married during the year and carried on her lessons under the supervision of her husband. Stories such as these are legion and await the hand of a novelist to weave them into a tale of the Australian outback.

Ways and means were continually being sought to stimulate contact between the members of this far-flung school and to attempt to make up to these children for some of the things their isolated lives caused them to miss.

In 1934, a Bird Club was formed, with over a hundred foundation members. Some pupils prepared bird studies and notes, others entered competitions for observation studies; several won prizes for their efforts. Under the leadership of a girl aged 12 years, a group of pupils issued a magazine, duplicated by the school. This was the beginning of a school magazine, which came into being in the following year. Another simple, but very effective, means of encouraging a school spirit was by the institution of a metal school badge which would serve to introduce one pupil to another.

Many pupils in small schools who had gained their Qualifying Certificate had no opportunity to continue their education, although the inclination was there. Consequently, lessons for super-primary subjects were distributed to schools, and the rural school teacher carried out general oversight of the higher grade work. The scheme began in 1932; four years later ninety small schools were being assisted.

The super-primary work, as distinct from the Intermediate secondary course, was further extended to include Plant Drawing, Design (colour blending), Lettering, Decorative Needlework, Knitting and Crocheting. Plain sewing was also made a compulsory subject for girls in Grades VI and VII. This was a constructive attempt to teach arts and crafts useful to girls in their future lives.

In 1940 there were 1,903 pupils from 850 different families (only 64 of whom employed paid supervisors); of these, 106

were in super-primary and intermediate classes. In that year the staff comprised the headmistress, 28 primary and three super-primary assistants and four typists.

During the war years the school continued to grow. The subjects offered at Intermediate level were extended to matriculation standard. Several hundred men and women in the services used the courses and, after the conclusion of hostilities, they were available to the reconstruction training students.

The South Australian School of Arts and Crafts: The beginnings of the correspondence branch of the art school are not recorded, but there is some evidence to show that there was a form of correspondence tuition in the early years of the century. The first official mention of this branch that can be found occurs in 1922. The courses were instituted mainly for country teachers who wished to complete requirements for teaching certificates.

Enrolments of this branch have fluctuated from year to year owing to the specialized nature of the courses. In 1928 there were 375 students, but during the period 1942-8 the average was about 200.

Western Australia: Largely as the result of the enthusiasm of Senior Inspector J. A. Miles, correspondence classes were established in 1918, with two teachers and 55 scholars. During the following years the classes grew steadily. By 1930, the staff consisted of a head teacher, 36 assistants and three clerks, and 1,903 pupils were enrolled.

By this year the correspondence school was meeting the needs of several distinct groups of pupils. The largest group consisted of children living in isolated homes, who were unable to reach any school. A second group consisted of children in small country schools who wished to remain at school for one or two years after Class VI. These courses were used by 1,250 pupils in about 500 schools in all parts of the State. A third group consisted of students who had left school but wished to continue their studies at home. Over one hundred such pupils were enrolled during 1930. A fourth group consisted of pupils who wished to take a course to enable them to pass the Junior Public Examination.* This work, begun in 1926, was undertaken by 53 pupils in 1930.

Thus, by 1930 the work of the school had advanced beyond the provision of instruction in the basic subjects. Pupils were being encouraged to use the travelling library, which included over 2,000 volumes; "Our Rural Magazine" had a wide circulation; senior pupils were corresponding with children in different parts of the Empire; an exhibition of work done by cor-

respondence pupils and illustrating all activities of the school was entered at the annual Royal Show. The work in self-expression—particularly the drawings and models—and the composition and story work were notable features. For several years a number of students (50 girls in 1930) had been given the opportunity to visit the metropolis and see, under competent direction, various phases of urban life and activities.

In 1935 pupils in Classes VIII and IX preparing for the Junior Certificate had their exercises marked by the teachers of the correspondence classes for the first time. The scheme proved so successful that, in the following year, the correspondence school agreed to take over all Class VII pupils in small schools, provided the parents intended to keep their children at school for the full period of the course. This provision of secondary courses, in addition to enriching the syllabus for older children and giving them the benefit of specialist lecturers, lightened the burden on rural teachers by lessening the number of classes under their direct control.

In 1940, the work of the school received a tribute from an unexpected source. The State Surveyor-General had been appointed a Royal Commissioner to report on the pastoral industry of Western Australia. *Inter alia* he stated in his report:—

It is not possible, except at considerable cost, for many of the children on stations in the pastoral areas to attend schools, consequently the system of education by correspondence established by the Education Department has proved of great value to pastoralists.

On a number of stations visited in various parts of the State, evidence of the benefits of this scheme was submitted to the Commission, and the impression was gained that the work of Mr. C. Eakins, Headmaster of the Correspondence Classes, and his staff, is widely appreciated, particularly in the drought affected areas, where it has been necessary to reduce all costs to a minimum.

In 1942, when the danger of invasion was most acute, large numbers of children were evacuated to the country; in consequence, nearly 500 extra pupils enrolled in the correspondence classes, and lesson papers were made available for hundreds of other children admitted to small country schools. In all, the correspondence classes rendered emergency aid to more than 1,000 children. Most of these were able to return to their original schools before the end of the year. Those in the primary classes were ready for promotion at the customary time, while those preparing for the Junior Certificate examination were assisted with all subjects previously studied by them, including a number of subjects (German, Biology, Physics and Zoology) not previously taught by the correspondence classes. Of the nine evacuees who completed their courses by correspondence

and sat for the Junior in 1942, two failed, and these had enrolled only a short time before the examination.

During the later war years the work of the correspondence classes again began to expand. At the end of 1944 the correspondence courses were made available to adults for the first time. These were mainly part-time students who received instruction for the Junior Certificate examination. Among them were young women wishing to qualify for the Nurses' Entrance examination, young men on farms, service personnel who wished to improve their status for civilian jobs, and other adults whose education had been cut short at an early age. To assist these outback students, the correspondence classes worked in close conjunction with the Perth Technical College.

In October, 1944, a successful tour was arranged for ninety senior pupils who were brought to Perth to participate in Rotary Youth week. During the week accommodation was provided by the parents of Perth pupils. The children spent each morning at the correspondence classes and became acquainted with their teachers and received instruction in such subjects as Art and Craft Work, Singing, Dramatics, Folk Dancing and Organised Games. In the afternoons they visited places of educational interest. Even before the arrival of peace, the correspondence classes were extending their scope and enriching the content of education for their pupils and past pupils.

Tasmania: The Tasmanian correspondence school was opened in January, 1919, under Miss H. Wellard, who had previously visited the New South Wales correspondence school for observation.

Within the year two assistant teachers were needed, and by the end of 1922 there was a staff of ten.

As the numbers in Tasmania were always so much smaller than those of the other States, it was found better for each teacher to take all-grades and conduct a small school. In this way, too, families could be kept in the same school, and this saved time and material. Later, Grades VI and VII were grouped as the children in those classes were entered for Scholarship and Merit Certificates.

The number of children enrolled increased gradually until 1937, when it exceeded 400; since that time it has remained between 300 and 400.

In 1939 the teaching of Art under a special teacher was introduced, and it soon became the favourite subject. The results were most satisfactory and interest was keen. The art work of the children was reproduced, together with examples of compositions, letters and stories in the annual magazine.

In 1945, the staff was extended to cope with a demand for secondary education from pupils unable to attend school through ill-health, and from adults in the country. Usually help was required in the matriculation subjects of English, French and Mathematics, but courses have also been provided in the preliminary four-year course for the School Certificate. A number of adults have used these courses; there were a number of young teachers anxious to improve their education and there were a number of girls preparing for the Nurses' Entrance examination. In 1946, fifty pupils were enrolled and in 1948 there were more than forty.

III

THE SIZE AND SCOPE OF CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION

The Number of Students Receiving Tuition

Starting from modest beginnings in Victoria and New South Wales, the correspondence systems of the State Education Departments have now reached large proportions. Since 1930 the number of enrolments in the primary sections has risen very slightly, but the rise in secondary enrolments has been considerable. During this period Western Australian enrolments have dropped by twenty-five per cent., Queensland and New South Wales have shown a ten per cent. increase, and numbers in the other States have remained relatively constant. However, the rise in correspondence school attendance has not kept pace with the rise in population. This may be attributed to increasing urbanisation, to the decline in pioneering, to the consolidation of schools and to the provision of bus services, which has been less extensive in the north-eastern States than elsewhere. On the other hand, several States have lowered the distance qualification for younger children in recent years and the provision of more secondary courses has tended to increase enrolments. During the past five years hundreds of soldiers and sailors have tried to remedy their lack of early education or have enrolled for secondary courses with the intention of matriculating. These were in addition to the tens of thousands who sought vocational courses through the technical schools. Table III shows the number of students who enrolled at any time during 1946 for a course with either the primary or secondary branches of the correspondence schools. Although some pupils were enrolled for a short period only, these numbers are a better indication of the schools' service to the community than enrolments at a given date.

As the published figures in Western Australia do not separate primary and secondary enrolments, an estimate has been made in the following Table.

Table IV is of more value in estimating the amount of instruction being undertaken by the correspondence schools at any given time and the relative size of correspondence enrolments compared with those of all schools. The figures presented are not strictly comparable, but if considered broadly they give a truer perspective of the size of correspondence school work than any generalized statement would do. Most of the figures

TABLE III

NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED DURING 1946¹

Type	N.S.W.	Vic.	Q'ld.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	Total	N.Z.
Primary	7290	1248	8853	1612	1930*	500	21,433	2789
Secondary ..	1340	521	677	329	470*	50	3,387	5130
TOTAL	8630	1769	9530	1941	2400	550	24,820	7919

*An estimate. ** 1 January 1948 to 30 June 1948.

quoted are from the age-grade tables for 1946; that for New South Wales was compiled in August; that for Queensland primary section on 31 December; for Western Australia on 31 July; and for the others on 30 June. In an endeavour to lessen fluctuations caused by the temporary presence of ex-servicemen, no pupil in primary schools over the age of eighteen years was included. (The Queensland primary section had over 400 of these, while New South Wales had very few, if any.) As the Western Australian age-grade table combines students sixteen years old and over, the figure quoted is an estimate of those under the age

TABLE IV

NUMBERS OF CORRESPONDENCE PUPILS
RELATIVE TO SCHOOL POPULATION, 1946

Type	N.S.W.	Vic.	Q'ld.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	Total	N.Z.
Primary Correspondence	5210	735	4956	933	1370	309	13,513	1838
Secondary Correspondence	667	428	350	102	350	23	1920	3190
(1) Total Correspondence	5877	1163	5306	1035	1720	332	15,433	5028
(2) School Population	460,000	300,000	165,000	85,000	75,000	40,000	1,120,000	
(1) Expressed as a percentage of (2)	1.3	.4	3.2	1.2	2.5	.8	1.4	1.5

* At 30 June 1948.

¹The latest available figures, for pupils on the roll at 30 June 1948 are:

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Q'ld.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
Primary	5101	750	4960	922	1231	335
Secondary	775	468		196	534*	22

*Home Cases only: Plus 674 receiving instruction in Schools, of whom 264 were receiving instruction in Needlework.

of eighteen. In Victoria the figures quoted are the net enrolment for the year. The Queensland secondary figure is an estimated net enrolment and, like the Victorian figures, includes teachers and adults, the numbers of whom cannot be estimated. The total school populations are estimates only, and must be allowed a five per cent. margin of error, as it is very difficult to estimate the number of pupils in private schools accurately.

From these Tables it will be seen that correspondence tuition remains an educational medium of considerable importance in Australia, especially in those States where areas are large and population is scanty. At any given time there are over 15,000 students receiving their primary or secondary education by correspondence, and during the course of a year nearly double that number are affected. Many of those in primary schools would not otherwise be receiving any education at all.

As children become older, they are able to go farther to attend a school, and in some cases they go to boarding school or live with friends in a town. This trend is demonstrated by the age-grade tables prepared by education departments. In Queensland 4 per cent. of all children in State primary schools are in the correspondence school; but of all children in preparatory grades (two years), six per cent. are in the correspondence school. Only four per cent. of all Grade II pupils are in the correspondence school. In South Australia 1.6 per cent. of all children in State primary schools are in the correspondence schools, but 2.6 per cent. of all Grade I pupils are in the correspondence school.

The Number of Pupils who have received Correspondence Instruction

It has not been possible to secure in each State the cumulative number of students who have enrolled since the inception of the schemes, but the available figures give some indication of the number of children they have reached. Until the end of 1946 approximately 54,000 children had studied through the Queensland primary correspondence school and over 5,000 through the Tasmanian; in addition, 10,000 students had commenced secondary courses in Queensland, but as most of these had probably already completed part of their primary course in the same way, the primary enrolments probably furnish a truer indication of the part played by correspondence education in this State. In New South Wales and South Australia the primary and secondary enrolments are not separated. In New South Wales the cumulative enrolment until December, 1946, was about 60,000, and in South Australia over 15,000. From these figures and from a rough estimate for Victoria and Western Australia it seems

that over 150,000 children have received all or part of their education by correspondence. During the 25 years, 1917-41, the number of births (less the number of deaths of children under the age of fourteen years¹) was about three million. Thus, it appears that approximately 5 per cent. of all Australians under the age of 31 have been enrolled, at one time or another, in a primary correspondence school.

Pupil Turn-Over

The pupil turn-over each year in the primary correspondence schools is high. In 1946 the Victorian gross enrolment was 1,284, and the net enrolment 735; in Queensland the primary enrolment for the year was 8,853, but in December only 5,485 pupils were enrolled; in South Australia the December average over the period 1938-46 has been about 1,000 pupils, and in the same period the average annual number of new enrolments has been about 700 pupils.

The short period spent by most pupils in correspondence schools is clearly shown by figures supplied by Tasmania. In both 1945 and 1947 an analysis was made of the length of time each pupil had spent in the school, and of the reasons why pupils had left in 1945.

TABLE V
TIME SPENT IN TASMANIAN CORRESPONDENCE
SCHOOLS

<i>No. of years</i>	<i>1945 group</i>	<i>1947 group</i>
Less than 1 year	163	237
1	73	70
2	26	24
3	21	15
4	8	14
5	7	3
6	5	4
7	5	3
8	1	3
TOTAL	309	373

In each year it will be noticed that more than one half of all pupils had been in the school for less than one year and that no more than one quarter had spent more than two years in the school.

¹ These figures were extracted from Demography Bulletin, No 63, of the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics.

The following reasons were given when pupils left in 1945.

Over age	13
To technical correspondence schools	24
To State schools	129
To non-State schools	4
Ill	15
Left State	9
No reply	14

208

One reason is that a high proportion of children who begin their schooling by correspondence continue it elsewhere. This is clearly shown by the above study of the available age-grade tables. In South Australia there are almost twice as many children in grade I as in grade III, and this shrinkage continues, though not at the same rate, in later years.

Another reason for this high turn-over is the flexibility of the method. Often a small country school has to be closed, perhaps because of the illness of the teacher, because suitable board cannot be found for her, or because of a drop in enrolments. When this happens the pupils of the closed school are enrolled with the correspondence school. In a month or two, when the school is re-opened, the pupils return to it. Pupils in hospital or convalescing from illnesses may also be on the rolls for short periods only.

The figures supplied by several States show the number of children enrolled in the primary correspondence school in 1946, who have received all their schooling by correspondence. For comparative purposes these are expressed as a percentage of the average or net enrolment of the school. In Victoria there were 360 pupils (48½%), in Queensland, 1607 (32%), and in Tasmania 106 (33%). In view of the large numbers who spend only their early years¹ in the school it is probable that the percentage in the upper classes is much lower.

Staffing

Table VI (page 32) gives the numbers on the staff of the schools.

One of the more interesting features of this table is the varying proportions of clerical workers to teachers. This proportion is highest in Queensland; in the secondary section where there are five clerical workers to seven teachers, it seems that the teachers are able to devote more time to their teaching functions. New South Wales provides the other extreme with one clerical assistant to over thirty-three teachers. Here the

¹ Out of 2,028 pupils in the Queensland preparatory grades in October 1948, there were 1,739 (83%) who had not attended another school.

burden of sorting and despatching falls upon the teacher. However, the headmaster considers the teaching is improved through the breaks as the change in occupation relieves fatigue and more than offsets the increased cost of salaries. One reason for the relatively low proportion of clerical workers at Blackfriars is that the duplicating burden is much less, as lessons are printed by the government printer; as all material is supplied free, there is no accounts section in this school.

TABLE VI

STAFFING OF CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS, 1948

Teachers	N.S.W.	Vic.	Q'ld.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	Total	N.Z.
1. Full-time								
Primary	116	29	101	31	32	13	322	50
Secondary	53	24	7	5	22	1	112	90
2. Part-time								
Primary	—	—	—	3	1	1	5	—
Secondary	—	1	—	3	—	1	5	—
3. Clerical								
Assistants	5	6	20	4	5	1	41	40

Table VII compares the number of pupils allotted to correspondence teachers in the different States. In view of the high pupil turn-over the figures are not exact, but represent rough averages on one day in the year. Most of the primary averages were derived by dividing the number of teachers on 30 June 1948 into the number of pupils enrolled on that day; the figures for New South Wales are the official quota on which staffing is based, as the averages derived by the above method approached the quota closely. As so many of the secondary teachers deal with individual subjects and not with classes, an "average class" would be a fiction. Queensland preparatory grades are placed opposite "1," Grade 1 totals are opposite "2," and so on. By this arrangement the grades correspond more nearly in age than if the Queensland system of numbering were adopted.

The States vary considerably in the number of pupils allotted to each teacher. These differences can be explained partly by the differing clerical load borne by teachers and partly by the system of organization adopted. In Queensland, where the clerical assistance is greatest, the teachers have larger classes. In Queensland and New South Wales the largest classes are found in the lowest grades where the burden of correction is least, but, in the highest grades, the numbers are more nearly comparable with those in South Australia and Tasmania (which use the family-class system of organization in which one teacher has children from a number of grades).

TABLE VII
AVERAGE NUMBER OF PUPILS PER TEACHER, 1943

Grade	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.Z.
1	56	—	74	—	—	—	75
2	—	—	53	—	—	—	—
3	47	—	50	—	—	—	—
4	45	—	40	—	—	—	—
5	39	—	35	—	—	—	45
6	34	—	36	—	—	—	—
7	—	—	35	—	—	—	—
8	—	—	24	—	—	—	—
Primary Average	44	28	51	28	48	32	37

The Scope of Correspondence Education

It is not easy to generalize regarding the scope of correspondence education in Australia. In some States the correspondence school provides secondary instruction to matriculation level, in the others to Intermediate standard. In some cases the secondary instruction is of a general nature, in other cases it is for the academic or professional training of a specified group of students, such as teachers or nurses. In view of the variation between States each is treated separately.

New South Wales: At Blackfriars the courses parallel those of the ordinary State schools. Pupils remain in the primary section until the sixth grade, which is normally attained at the age of twelve or thirteen years, and then transfer to the secondary section for the non-examination course or for the three-year course leading to the Intermediate Certificate. Plans are being prepared to continue this course to matriculation standard (a further two years), but at present post-Intermediate courses are provided through a Technical College. To avoid duplication of work, a scheme of reciprocity between Blackfriars and the Sydney Technical College has operated since 1937. All lessons in subjects taught by Blackfriars are set and marked there, even though the student may have enrolled through the Technical College; Blackfriars pupils are allowed to include one Technical College subject in their courses free of cost.

In addition, hundreds of small schools (including subsidized schools) are provided with secondary leaflets for pupils in seventh, eighth, and ninth grades and certain subsidized schools¹ are provided with primary leaflets. Some of the assignments are returned to the correspondence school for correction, and some are corrected by the local teacher.

¹ If several parents in a sparsely populated district can secure the services of someone deemed suitable to teach children, part of the cost is met by the Education Department.

Victoria: The primary branch of the Victorian correspondence school has carried instruction to the eighth grade level, although the general tendency throughout the ordinary schools has been to differentiate pupils after sixth grade into high, central or technical schools. Up to the present the correspondence school has continued with the older primary syllabus with the result that pupils are required to spend a further three years to complete the Intermediate course. However, plans are at present being considered to enrich the curriculum in the seventh and eighth grades for those pupils who expect to undertake the secondary course. The school provides the full secondary course to matriculation standard and also has specialist courses for teachers in infant work, Drawing and Needlework. An interesting provision of the Victorian scheme is that all secondary pupils who live within four miles of a primary school are required to continue in attendance and the local teacher supervises their work. While the primary enrolments are smaller than those of other States, Victoria has a very extensive system of secondary correspondence instruction.

Queensland: Instruction in the academic subjects is provided by two separate institutions in Brisbane. The primary correspondence school provides the normal course to the end of seventh grade; at this stage some pupils enter for the State scholarship examination which allows a free two-year secondary course (with a right of extension) to those who are successful. This examination is normally taken at the age of 14 years.

The correspondence tuition department, which is attached to the teachers' training college, offers the two-year course leading to the Junior Certificate and a further course of two years to Senior (matriculation) standard. In addition, it offers courses in Educational Theory and such teaching subjects as Drawing and Music for teachers who wish to qualify for departmental examinations.

South Australia: The correspondence school offers classes from the infant grades to Leaving Certificate (matriculation). Children remain in the primary section until they have completed the work of the seventh grade, at about the age of twelve years. The usual academic subjects are available in the secondary course, but there is also a super-primary course in Drawing, the Domestic Arts, and Craft subjects.

There has been a marked expansion in the secondary section, an increase most easily shown by the numbers enrolled in December.

1941	49
1942	54
1943	193
1944	229
1945	155
1946	145
1947	135

* Though the peak reached in 1943-4 has not been maintained, numbers remain several times higher than the pre-war average.

The South Australian School of Arts and Crafts has a small correspondence branch, giving instruction in a wide range of subjects. At present both teachers and other country students are among the two hundred enrolled.

Western Australia: The scope of the work carried on in 1947 is best revealed by the analysis of enrolments.

Group 1: Children instructed in outback areas	1,517
Group 2: Crippled children in metropolitan area .. .	83
Group 3: Post-primary pupils in small rural schools ..	310
(All subjects by correspondence)	
Group 4: Post-primary pupils in larger rural schools ..	157
(Special subjects only by correspondence)	
Group 5: Girls enrolled for needlework in small rural schools without a needlework instructress .. .	101
Group 6: Adult students	272
(Mainly ex-service personnel)	

2,440

Assistance is now rendered to several new groups of students including (a) post-primary pupils in larger rural schools (as distinct from small schools), who may take subjects not included in the rural school curriculum (usually French, Latin, Science, etc.); (b) girls for needlework in small rural schools where a needlework instructress has not been provided; (c) adult students with a wide range of subjects up to the "Junior" standard.

Special courses have also been developed to provide for the following groups of students:

1. Students taking a general course—usually 5 or 6 subjects.
 2. Students preparing for public examinations, whose course is determined by examination requirements.
 3. Students preparing for positions in the public service, or with private firms.
 4. Continuation students who have left school, but wish to continue with one or more subjects in which they are specially interested. This section contains a large percentage of adults.
 5. Senior girls who wish to prepare for the Nurses' Entrance examination.
- Senior girls who have passed the Nurses' Entrance examination and who wish to continue with a pre-nursing course in Physiology, Hygiene and Anatomy.

In the post-primary division the correspondence school works in close co-operation with the Perth Technical College. Students may enrol with this school for a wide range of academic subjects, and may join up with the Technical College for selected commercial or technical subjects. This organization, which has proved very satisfactory, brings practically all subjects within reach of out-back students.

In Western Australia the correspondence courses are provided only to Junior Certificate standard. In addition, courses are provided for post-primary pupils who do not intend studying for the Junior Examination, and for adults who desire to better their standard of education or to qualify at some special examination, such as the Nurses' Entrance Examination. When the post-primary pupils do not intend to take the Junior Examination their work is corrected by the rural school teacher; otherwise the teacher merely acts as a supervisor.

Tasmania: In Tasmania instruction is provided in the primary subjects. The secondary section offers instruction to matriculation level in English, French and Mathematics; students may study other subjects needed to complete Matriculation privately, or they may enrol with the technical correspondence school.

The Present Position: It will thus be seen that there are considerable variations in the correspondence facilities provided for pupils who have passed the primary stage. In three States instruction in the academic subjects is provided to Matriculation level and in the others only to Intermediate level; some States require secondary students to attend a local primary school to work under supervision and in other States they work independently; some provide tuition in craft work, others confine themselves to the traditional subjects.

One interesting and significant advance is the development of post-primary courses intended specifically for correspondence pupils. It is of doubtful value to provide out-back children with an education which is almost completely lacking in application to their future lives. Public Examination Certificates, however suitable as preliminary qualifications for clerical or professional work, are less appropriate for the lives which many pupils will probably lead. Though there will always be some students who will desire the examination qualifications, the majority of out-back pupils may be better served by courses with a vocational bias. Several correspondence schools have shown themselves to be progressive in this way.

IV

ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS OF CORRESPONDENCE WORK

Enrolment

Conditions of Entry: The correspondence schools in all States are open to those children who are unable to attend an ordinary school. The majority of children are those who are enrolled by reason of their remoteness, but there are also enrolments from invalids, hospital cases, and from children whose parents travel from place to place. If any of these conditions are satisfied the only further requirements are that someone in the home of the primary school child must be prepared to exercise a general supervision over the pupil's work or that a student wishing to enrol in the secondary department must have completed the primary course.

In earlier years children were required to live more than three miles from the nearest school and to be not less than six years of age. In recent years these conditions have been eased in several States; in South Australia any child below the age of seven years may be enrolled if he lives more than one mile from a school, or, if he is between the ages of seven and nine years and he lives more than two miles away; in Queensland any child under the age of ten years who lives more than two miles from a school may be enrolled. Here it has been ruled that the distance is to be measured by the nearest public road and not across paddocks or by other short cuts. Any child living between two and three miles away must attend school after his tenth birthday. In 1948 the average number of pupils living between two and three miles from the nearest school was 120. In many cases parents prefer to send their children to school, but home conditions play an important part. The present lack of farm labour and the ability to spare time for teaching affect the numbers. In Western Australia the compulsory distance varies from one to three miles according to the age of the child.

The provision of school transport services has allowed many isolated children to attend school. In South Australia children living within the above distances of a government-controlled transport scheme must attend the local school. In Tasmania, however, children living more than one mile from a bus route may be admitted to the correspondence school.

There are variations in the permissible age of admission. In Queensland and South Australia pupils can enter at the age of five years, and at least one-third of all in the first class do so.

In New South Wales special approval is needed for the enrolment of six-year-old children. This is given if other members of a family are already enrolled, if the child has already attended school elsewhere, or if it can be shown that the child has a competent supervisor and seems capable of doing the work of the leaflets. In Western Australia the minimum age for admission is $5\frac{1}{2}$ years.

Only in Victoria is enrolment compulsory. Here children between the ages of compulsory attendance must enrol with the correspondence school if they are unable to attend school; in New South Wales the Child Welfare Department has the power to grant exemption from attendance at school to children living within the statutory distance, on condition that the pupil continues his lessons by correspondence. In other States attendance is optional.

Enrolment in secondary courses is still subject to restrictions in two States. In New South Wales, pupils must be not more than seventeen years of age and must be more than three miles from the nearest school. However, older students may receive instruction in similar subjects through the technical college. In Victoria, no student may be in full-time employment (except student teachers) and, unless a concession is granted on medical grounds, the student must work his papers under supervision if there is a primary school within four miles of his home. In Victoria, pupils attending a secondary school may receive assistance in a single subject if there is no qualified teacher on the staff. In 1947, the Victorian courses were made available to pupils in private schools.

Other Types of Children Enrolled: Table VIII shows the number of children enrolled for reasons other than remoteness. The first group consists of those suffering from a physical disability, those temporarily in hospital or convalescing and those permanently crippled. The second group consists of those whose parents, owing to the transitory nature of their occupations, have no fixed abode. These children of showmen, salesmen and other itinerant workers have not the ordinary amenities and do their work under difficulties. During the war years and early post-war years petrol rationing and the shortage of goods probably reduced the number of these itinerant workers below the pre-war level.

In addition to the categories shown, there were 489 servicemen or ex-servicemen enrolled with the Queensland primary correspondence school, and there were 33 other students who were employed by day. This school usually contains some students who did not complete the seventh grade, but who return

to complete this work as a pre-requisite for certain occupations. Most of the students enrolled with the Queensland secondary department were also employed by day.

TABLE VIII
NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENROLLED FOR SPECIAL REASONS, 1946

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Q'ld.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.Z.
<i>Physical Disability</i>							
Primary .. .	208	164	183	—	100	117	42
Secondary ..	80	25	6	—	—	—	615
<i>Nomadic Life</i>							
Primary .. .	41	—	14	—	—	1	—
Secondary .. .	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTALS .. .	331	189	203	(a) 100	(b) 117	43	615

(a) Approximately only.

(b) In 1945. The 117 pupils in Western Australia suffering from a physical disability were located as follows: In country homes, 21; in metropolitan homes, 93; in Perth Hospital, 3.

Enrolments Outside the State: Most of the correspondence schools have some pupils on their rolls who live in other parts of Australia (if the child intends returning to the State after a short period) and in other parts of the world. In 1948 the Queensland primary correspondence school, for example, was sending lessons to 179 pupils located as follows:—New Guinea, 51; Japan, 32; Papua, 25; Northern Territory, 24; Other States, 24; Pacific Islands, 11; Borneo, 8; Malaya, 1; Central China, 1; England, 1; N.E.I., 1.

The Initial Grading of New Pupils: When a child is first enrolled the supervisor indicates what schooling the pupil has previously received and, in some States, is required to forward samples of the pupil's work in Arithmetic and Composition. As it sometimes proves difficult to determine each child's level of attainment, the pupil is asked to comment on the ease or difficulty of the first assignments; from these, and from the standard of work submitted, his placement is adjusted.

Blackfriars has a more elaborate system of initial grading, and in 1946 six full-time testing teachers were employed. In addition to supplying the usual information regarding previous schooling the supervisor is required to forward samples of the child's work. If he has reached the third grade level, samples of arithmetic and composition are to be submitted; children in lower grades send in short sentences, and those who have not pre-

viously been to school are required to furnish any examples of writing or figuring they are able to do.

The first instalment of work consists of a test. Children are invited to ask questions about anything that is not understood and to comment on the difficulty of the work. The testing continues until the pupil knows the routine and his correct standard is known. As adjustments are made after each testing, the assignments may not be sent regularly during this period. If the pupil has not previously attended school he is immediately passed to an infants' teacher.

With children who have previously attended school, attainment in the English subjects is the chief basis for classification. In Victoria, if the standard in English and Arithmetic is not comparable, the practice of sending, for example, two Arithmetic with one English set is followed until the child is doing equivalent work in all subjects.

In the secondary departments there is less emphasis on grading. The completion of the primary course is usually a prerequisite for those wishing to undertake a secondary examination course and the completion of the Intermediate or Leaving course for those wishing to matriculate. At these levels students can indicate clearly the standard they have reached.

Staffing

Qualifications of Correspondence Teachers: It seems that a high percentage of teachers are appointed to correspondence schools because they are suffering from some permanent or temporary disability which renders them unsuitable for classroom teaching.¹ On the permanent staffs are crippled returned soldiers and others who have been permanently injured; other teachers who are convalescing from a severe illness may be appointed for a year or two. The following comment from one State probably applies to most:

It is to be noted that the great majority of teachers here are suffering from some physical disability which prevents them from teaching before a class. Many are, as may be expected, near to retiring age, but the service given is, generally, of a high standard

In the primary schools the staff turn-over is slight. In Tasmania about fourteen per cent. of the staff revert to full-time teaching each year, but elsewhere only a small percentage does so. In the Victorian secondary division a majority of the

¹ It is expected that, in due course, appointments in New South Wales will be made by normal transfer to meet the needs of correspondence education. Developments in courses and techniques have recently led to the appointment of younger teachers with special qualifications, so the percentage of teachers with disabilities is now lower.

appointments are temporary. With these exceptions, correspondence schools have aimed at building up staffs with increasing experience in the special problems and techniques of correspondence education.

The stability of the staffs of correspondence schools was borne out by four comparisons between staffs over a period of years. Of the eighteen members of the secondary section at Blackfriars in 1935, ten were teaching at the school in 1947; of the thirty-six in the infants' school at the earlier date, twelve remained twelve years later. Of 98 teachers on the Queensland staff in 1938, 49 are still listed in 1948. Of the sixty teachers listed in the Western Australian correspondence classes in February, 1940, twenty-nine were listed in 1948. These schools and dates were not specially selected for this purpose; they merely happened to be those most readily available from published records.

Staffing lists give some indication of the academic qualifications held by members of staff. At Blackfriars in 1947, twenty-four members of the secondary section and five other members held degrees; three held the degree of Master of Arts, four held a Bachelor of Economics degree, two held a Bachelor of Science degree and the remainder held Bachelor of Arts degrees. Two members of staff had degrees in two faculties. In Western Australia three members of staff have the degree of Bachelor of Arts and another has a bachelor's degree in both Arts and Science. Of the seven members in the Queensland secondary department in 1946, two hold M.A.'s and four B.A.'s. In South Australia one of the four full-time secondary teachers holds an M.A. and the remainder B.A.'s. Probably the secondary departments of the correspondence schools have staffs as well qualified academically as has the average high school.

In most States every certificated teacher has a classification rank which is attained as a result of experience, or efficiency, or both. By comparing the proportion of teachers on each rank with the proportion for the State as a whole, it is possible to secure some indication of the experience of the staff. In Western Australia and Tasmania the correspondence school has a higher proportion of staff with a higher status than would be expected for a school of its size, and has very few juniors or uncertificated teachers. This of course would be expected if the staffs were composed of older teachers. In South Australia the percentage of the assistant teachers on each rank was similar to that of the State as a whole.

An examination of the staffing of the Queensland primary correspondence school in 1944 suggests that the academic qualifications of the teachers there were poorer than those of the

State service as a whole. The percentage of teachers in each classification for the correspondence school and the State as a whole was as follows:

TABLE IX
PERCENTAGE OF QUEENSLAND TEACHERS IN
EACH CLASSIFICATION

Classification	Correspondence School ¹	Whole State ²
I	1.0	13.5
II	9.5	17.3
III	82.1	56.4
Unclassified	7.4	12.8
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

¹. 30 June 1944.

² 31 December 1943

In this State the personal classification was determined partly by length of service, but the passing of academic examinations was a pre-requisite to promotion to a higher class. As every teacher in the school was at the highest possible level within his own class it seems that (with the possible exception of Class II teachers) each teacher was debarred from promotion by the lack of academic qualifications. All those in Class III would be debarred from promotion by the lack of a matriculation pass; many of these were older teachers to whom the present facilities were not available in their youth. As the figures for the whole State included high school teachers, a high percentage of whom were in Class I, the percentage of Class I teachers in the correspondence school was not as disproportionate as it would seem at the first glance. However, there was a significantly higher proportion of correspondence teachers who had not reached the matriculation level than there was for the State as a whole.

Qualities Needed by the Good Correspondence Teacher: The qualifications of a good correspondence teacher are well described in the *Instructions to Teachers* issued by the New South Wales correspondence school. They are:

1. Familiarity with the details of organization and co-operation in giving effect to them
2. Knowledge of the individual pupils and of the environmental conditions under which children work.
3. The establishment of the right relations between teacher, pupil and supervisor.
4. The ability to criticize the instruction sheets constructively
5. The high quality of the teachers' corrections and the thoroughness with which all errors are corrected.

6. The skill in writing appropriate censure without repressing the spirit of the pupil.
7. The ability to plan diagnostic tests and remedial measures
8. Skill in planning the work of pupils with inefficient supervisors
9. Sympathy with retarded children and skill in accelerating them
10. Accuracy and neatness in compiling records

Clerical Staff and Equipment: Opinions differ as to whether the clerical staff is adequate for present needs. The larger schools possess a wider range of office equipment than the smaller ones; the Queensland primary correspondence school, for example, in 1948 possessed an electric addressograph (together with a manual graphotype for impressing the plates), an electric wire stitcher and an electric folder, in addition to duplicators and the more usual equipment. The smaller schools do not possess all these items.

Organization: Two methods of class organization are in use in the primary correspondence schools. In the three eastern mainland States each teacher is responsible for children in one grade only,¹ but in the other three States the position is analogous to that of a small country school where each teacher has pupils in a number of different grades. In South Australia and Tasmania the family group system is still in use. As all children from the one family are allotted to the one teacher, the link between home and school is strengthened. In these States, the one teacher may have pupils in half a dozen different grades; this system has been modified in Western Australia where the one teacher is responsible for children in no more than three grades at once. In the other three States an attempt is usually made to maintain the ties between school and family by having all members of the family taught by the same series of teachers in successive grades.

In view of the large staffs in New South Wales and Queensland, a sub-head is appointed to co-ordinate the work in his own grade and to relieve the headmaster of routine administration.

THE COST OF CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION

Charges for the Pupil: None of the States charges² fees for children enrolled in the primary school and all assist the student with varying amounts of material aid. In the secondary school, fees are charged in some cases, but there is usually some provision for free education for children who have recently completed the primary course. During recent years the secondary departments have enrolled many members of the armed forces and ex-servicemen; most of these have secured their courses

¹ Except in Grades I and II in New South Wales.

² Fees are charged for overseas pupils.

free through the army education or reconstruction training schemes.

Assistance to students takes three main forms; postage is paid both ways on exercises and books; pencils, paper and other stationery may be provided free; and reading and text-books may be given free or loaned for the duration of the course. In addition, some correspondence schools purchase other material on behalf of pupils.

The value of the stationery and books supplied increases in the higher grades. The average annual value (in 1946 prices) of material supplied free by the New South Wales correspondence school varies from 18/6 in Grade I to 22/- in Grade VI, in Queensland from 14/9 to 31/- and in Tasmania from 5/- to 11/-. The maximum amount which the child is required to spend on extra items is 6/9 in New South Wales, 20/- in Victoria, 14/- in Queensland and 15/- in Tasmania.

It seems that Queensland and New South Wales provide all that is essential for the course. Stationery supplied by Queensland includes exercise books, lead pencils, pen nibs, blotting paper and a ruler; the grade readers, the text books and the novel for the year are also supplied. The amount of stationery varies according to the age of the child; eight exercise books are provided in the preparatory grades and forty in Grade 5. Most of the States purchase for pupils extra material such as supplementary readers, the badge, an atlas, a dictionary or geometry sets which are not supplied free by the school.

*The Cost to the State.*¹ It might be expected that the facilities which have been described are an expensive item in the education bill of the various States, but this does not seem to be the case. In several States the costs of correspondence education appear to be similar to, or slightly higher than, those in normal schools, but in the majority of States the annual costs appear to be lower even than those of a large city school, and the capital costs would be very much lower.

This tendency towards lower costs is well illustrated over a long period of years by figures published annually in the Report of the Education Department in Western Australia. For this purpose schools are grouped in classes according to the number of pupils; Class IA-III schools in 1945 numbered 69, with a mean enrolment of 440 pupils; in the same year 387 Class VII schools had a mean enrolment of 12 pupils.

¹ The annual cost of correspondence and other pupils in New Zealand is:

	Correspondence	Other
Primary	£22 5s.	£26 10s.
Post-Primary	£24 10s.	£43 10s.

TABLE X
COMPARATIVE COSTS IN SCHOOLS OF DIFFERENT
SIZE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

(Expressed in terms of cost-per-head of average enrolment.)

Year	Correspondence	Class I-A-III	Class VII
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1928-9	6 13 0	7 16 0	16 19 0
1932-3	4 19 0	6 2 0	15 8 0
1936-7	6 13 0	8 2 0	19 5 0
1939-40	9 1 0	9 0 0	20 4 0
1944-5	8 2 0	10 11 0	25 4 0

A comparison of the cost per pupil figures in South Australia during the period 1942-6 reveals that the cost for each correspondence pupil (including both primary and secondary sections) is about twenty per cent. less than the average cost of the State primary schools. The expenditure per secondary pupil is normally considerably higher than that on primary pupils.

In Victoria in 1946-7, the expenditure on secondary correspondence pupils was less (per head) than the State average, but the expenditure on primary pupils was above the State average. This was chiefly due to the difference in the salaries paid to teachers in the two sections. Whereas the mean salary paid to teachers in the primary section was about £550, that of secondary teachers was lower. This unusual result was caused by the temporary employment of some retired teachers on the secondary staff. These teachers received lower salaries than classified teachers of the same experience.

A different position is revealed by a study of Tasmanian costs as published in the Annual Reports of the Education Department. The amounts quoted in Table XI include salaries, maintenance, sanitary and fuel; there is no indication of whether such items as postage and stationery are included but, if they are not, the correspondence school would be more costly than it appears below. In 1946 there were 88 Class VII schools (8-20 pupils) and 21 Class I-II schools (more than 300 pupils).

TABLE XI
COMPARATIVE COSTS IN SCHOOLS OF DIFFERENT
SIZE IN TASMANIA

(Expressed in terms of cost-per-head of average enrolment.)

Year	Correspondence	Class I-II	Class VII
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1930	7 10 0	5 12 0	9 4 0
1934	5 16 0	4 10 0	8 0 0
1938	8 2 0	6 6 0	8 6 0
1942	12 2 0	7 8 0	11 4 0
1946	14 18 0	9 16 0	14 2 0

In this case it seems that the high cost per correspondence pupil is due to the small number of pupils per teacher. In 1948, there were only about 26 pupils per teacher in the primary correspondence school and in 1946 the average number in attendance was probably less.

The high proportion which salaries bear to the total cost of a correspondence school raises the problem of the optimum number of clerical staff to be employed. It is obviously uneconomical both in money and talent to have highly-paid and trained teachers attending to the clerical details of postage and routing of assignments and corrections. Yet this seems inevitable in some States in view of the limited clerical assistance available.

In regard to capital expenditure it seems that the correspondence schools would be less expensive than ordinary schools; the size of building required to accommodate one hundred teachers and twenty clerical workers would be far less than that required for the five thousand children they teach.

Queensland and New South Wales do not separate their costs to the same extent as the other States, but from a comparison of the mean salaries paid in the Queensland correspondence schools (in 1946, about £500 in the secondary division and £373 in the primary section) and the number of pupils allotted to each teacher it seems that the costs may be lower than those in ordinary schools.

However, considering the importance of the pioneering element in our population, the amount of effort and determination on the part of both pupils and parents which enrolment in the correspondence school implies, and the educational success achieved, it will be generally agreed that the expenditure on correspondence work is more than justified.

V CURRICULA

The Subjects Taught by the Primary Correspondence Schools

At present nearly all the subjects taught in the ordinary school are offered by the State primary correspondence schools. Each school omits some of the normal curriculum but, as the section omitted varies from State to State, it seems that the reason lies not in any inherent difficulty in teaching the subject but in the desire to lighten the burden of work in some direction. Eighteen years ago it was noted that music was not included in the curricula of any correspondence school, and probably the same was true of speech; at present, lessons in these subjects are provided by radio broadcast. Since 1930 a variety of activities has been added to the curricula of correspondence schools; New South Wales offers courses in housecraft, outdoor occupations, and handwork, Victoria has short courses in gardening and young farmers' handicrafts, and other States offer needlework and craft work. From the experience of these States it appears practicable to teach these subjects by correspondence. Although the fundamental subjects of reading, composition and arithmetic still form the core of the correspondence school courses, other subjects are not neglected.

The Subjects Taught by the Secondary Correspondence Schools

With the exception of post-primary pupils in small rural schools most students in the secondary correspondence schools¹ are following the courses for the Intermediate (Junior) examinations, which are usually taken at the age of fifteen years, or those for the matriculation examination taken two years later.² In some States another examination, the Leaving Examination, occurs between these two. As the objective of many students is the completion of the examination³ requirements, the correspondence schools have tended to restrict the range of subjects to those which they feel can be taught with reasonable success. Accordingly, the range of subjects offered by the secondary correspondence schools is narrower, relative to all academic secondary schools, than is the primary school range.

¹ New South Wales is an exception. Very few of the secondary pupils desire to sit for, or even study for, the Intermediate Certificate examination.

² Only one year later in South Australia, where the Leaving Examination serves for matriculation purposes.

The subjects offered by the correspondence schools for the secondary examinations are shown in Table XII. Those offered for the Leaving and Matriculation Examinations are indicated by the letters L and M respectively.

TABLE XII
SUBJECTS IN SECONDARY CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas. xx
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL					
English	English	English	English	English	English
French	French	French	French	French	French
Latin	Latin	Latin	Latin	Latin	
Arithmetic	Arithmetic	Arithmetic	Arithmetic		Arithmetic
Algebra		Algebra			Algebra
Geometry	Maths. A	Geometry	Maths. (2 subjects)	Maths. A	
General Maths.	Maths. B			Maths. B	General Maths.
Trigonometry					
History	History	History	History	History	Mod. History
Geography	Geography	Geography	Geography	Geography	Geography
Art	Art			Art	
Technical					
Drawing					
Business	Commercial	Bookkeeping			Commercial
Principles	Principles	Shorthand			Principles
and Practice	and Practice				and Practice
Needlework					
	Ag. Science			Physiology Gen. Science Physics Ag. Science	
LEAVING (L) AND MATRICULATION (M)					
Leaving (Matriculation)	English (L, M)	English	English	Leaving (Matriculation)	English (S, M)
Courses Provided By Technical College x	Eng. Liter. (M) French (L, M) Latin (L) Maths. I (L, M) Maths. II (L) Mod. History (L) Geography (L, M) Economics (N, M) Art (L) Ag. Science (L)	French Latin Maths. I Maths. II Mod. History Geography Logic	French Latin Maths. I Maths. II Arithmetic Mod. History Econ. History Geography	Courses Provided By Technical College x	French (S, M) General Maths. (S, M)

x See Plate I opposite for the list of technical college subjects.

xx S = Schools Certificate Examination. Other subjects are provided by the technical college.

Courses for Pupils in Attendance at Schools

Procedure for the provision and correction of courses for pupils attending small schools varies from State to State and even within a State. In Victoria, secondary pupils are required to attend the nearest school and work under the supervision of the local teacher, although their papers are sent to Melbourne for correction. In Queensland, instruction is direct to the pupil; the rare exceptions occur when the teacher of a small school may

COMMONWEALTH RECONSTRUCTION TRAINING SCHEME

[TYCHHUICA]

1. **COUNTRY**
2. **INCLUDE (INCLUDES CENTRAL AUSTRALIA AND HORTON TERRITORY)**
3. **WATERWAYS**
4. **WATERWAY**
5. **WATERWAY**

have too many classes to allow him to form another class for a new and temporary pupil who would attend the school but be taught by correspondence leaflets.

In South Australia, the leaflets for secondary pupils in Grade VIII are available to students who are unable to attend a high school because of distance. Usually the teacher marks the work, but the terminal papers marked by the teacher are checked by the correspondence school and advice is given on standards and methods. Where the primary school is so big that the teacher cannot spare the time for Grade VIII or where there is no teacher qualified to teach a subject, full correspondence instruction is given.

In New South Wales and Western Australia secondary pupils with the ability and intention of proceeding to Intermediate level are enrolled by the correspondence school; other secondary pupils receive the correspondence leaflets, but the work is usually corrected by the local teacher. Even when the written exercises are corrected by the correspondence school, the local teacher is required to see that pupils prepare their work thoroughly and work regularly to a time table; they must also check the pupil's work to see that all exercises in every subject have been completed.

VI METHODS

Assignments

The basis of correspondence instruction is the careful sub-division of each subject into a number of units, which can be sent to pupils in the form of tasks or assignments. Each assignment deals with one topic or section of the work in each of the subjects; new processes are explained, illustrations are given, there are practice examples to be answered in writing and tables and spelling to be learnt; finally, there is a test to be completed by the pupil without assistance and returned to the correspondence school for correction.

The size of the assignments varies according to the frequency with which they are sent. Queensland and New South Wales use weekly assignments; in the other States, where the unit is a fortnight's work, there is approximately twice as much in each set. At the secondary level Victoria sends assignments five weeks in advance, while Queensland and Tasmania send several assignments in advance and forward others as the work is returned. The small number of secondary pupils allows greater flexibility than is possible in the primary schools.

In most States the lesson sheets are typewritten or duplicated, but in New South Wales most are printed booklets; in Queensland, leaflets, printed in colour with attractive illustrations, are available for the lower grades. Printed leaflets are used in secondary courses in New South Wales and Western Australia. Apart from the question of cost, it seems that the only advantage of duplicated sheets as against printed leaflets is that revision is easier whenever experience points to the desirability of some alteration. If the leaflets are in printed form the extra cost of revision may delay desirable alterations. New South Wales overcomes this problem by replacing sections needing revision by duplicated pages which can be put into use without delay.

The Correction of Assignments.

Each assignment contains practice work, which is corrected by the home supervisor from keys supplied, and written exercises which are returned to the correspondence school for correction. Some States furnish model answers to some exercises; these are most often provided in the secondary department. When the leaflets are supplied to small schools the work may be corrected by the local teacher.

Each State has its own detailed methods of dealing with the work sent in by the pupils, of preparing lessons and of keeping records of pupils' progress. Since such details may be helpful to overseas educational authorities, an account of the methods employed at Blackfriars, where the large size of the school has necessitated careful organization, may be of interest. It is to be remembered that the other States employ methods which differ from the following, and that they find them successful.

Each pupil has three exercise books (which are numbered for purposes of identification) in use at any one time. Each book shows the pupil's age, the date on which the book was issued, the grade in which the child is working, the teacher's distinguishing number, the day of the week on which the book is mailed, and the name and address of the child's supervisor in the home. By having three books one can be at the pupil's home, one at the school for correction, and one in transit. A completed book is retained by the pupil and a new book is issued; part of the first book of each pupil and part of the first book each year are attached to the pupil's record. The books of all members of the one family are collected by one teacher and posted together, even though they are marked by different teachers. The teachers are expected to correct and return books the same week that they arrive, and thus the continuity of the child's work is disturbed only by causes arising in the home.

The teacher keeps a record of all assignments despatched. If a child's work does not arrive and no explanation is received the child's name is passed on to the section supervisor for attention. If no work has been received from a pupil for three weeks he is marked as "extended absent," and when work is resumed the reason for this delay is entered on the roll. At the beginning of a new term those pupils whose books are not in the school and who have not notified the teacher of their intended absence are not entered on the roll.

Each child's personal history card contains a record of his progress from the date of his entry, including the number of weeks he is absent and details of any physical and environmental disabilities. All information, whether gained by correspondence or otherwise, regarding any pupil is entered, either on the set spaces on the front of each card, or on the back.

Each week every pupil receives a standard set of leaflets, and special sheets dealing with current events are issued from time to time. Forty-two issues comprise a year's work, though, as will be seen below, not all of these need be completed before the child is promoted.

Careful instructions guide newly appointed teachers in correcting the work sent in by pupils.

For example, the mark \checkmark means nothing to children in lower classes who have never been to school, or have not been told its meaning; hence the symbols "R" and "W" are preferred. The spirit in which the corrections are to be made is indicated in the suggestion that praise rather than blame is to be bestowed, and that even when the work appears undeserving there will probably be some portion which can be praised.

From this it should not be inferred that the school does not attempt to exercise control. Teachers insist that each instruction be implicitly obeyed. Answers copied directly from the leaflets are not accepted, and troublesome pupils and supervisors are brought under the notice of the sub-head. The teacher must not grumble or nag, but he must reprimand careless or indifferent work. Although the demands on the teacher are not the same as in the class-room, there is scope for teaching skill in sympathetic appreciation of difficulties, both educational and otherwise, in the ability to detect and remedy weaknesses, in the knack of arousing interest and stimulating greater effort, and, perhaps chiefly, in the capacity for making the child feel that he is a personal friend of the teacher.

In the secondary department in New South Wales most teachers are subject specialists who deal only with one of the half dozen or more subjects taken by the pupil. Accordingly, there is not the same close, personal contact between pupils and staff as is found in the primary school. As each set of returned papers must be divided among several teachers and must again be reassembled for return to the student, the system of instruction by subjects increases the need for clerical assistance.

Promotion

In each State there are some differences in the methods of promotion, but, in general, a child is promoted when he has finished the work of a given grade. The usual rigid restriction of promotion to the beginning of a school year does not apply. This contrasts with the procedure in an ordinary school where children who have failed in the annual examination may be compelled to repeat the whole year's work.

In New South Wales children are promoted from first to second and from second to third grades at any time. Promotions from other classes, except in specially approved cases, are made at the end of a term. In general, the English group of subjects is regarded as the basis of classification. In the secondary department a pupil may be promoted to a higher grade in particular subjects but not in others.

In Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania pupils may commence on any school day and are promoted when the work of

the grade is completed. In practice this means that some promotions may be made in every week of the school year. In Queensland, where a complete school-year's work consists of 42 sets of papers, a test paper is sent with set 38. This must be worked under examination conditions without reference to papers or books; home supervisors are required to certify that the working of the test is the unaided effort of the pupil concerned. If a pupil fails to pass the test satisfactorily he is not promoted until a better standard has been reached.

Instructions to Supervisors¹ and Students

In the lower grades of the primary school the interest and ability of the supervisor is one of the most important factors in giving pupils a sound grasp of the basic subjects. During the first two or three years supervision is almost a full-time job, for until the pupil is able to follow the printed instructions all work must be carefully explained. However, from the beginning, parents are instructed and encouraged to develop the child's independence and initiative until, in the upper grades of the primary school, only discussion and general oversight are needed. If the parents are illiterate or uninterested, the child will have the greatest difficulty in mastering his work in these early years.

To facilitate the administrative routine, each school provides information on its methods, and instruction on its procedures, for pupils and supervisors. Queensland has a sixteen-page booklet, others have printed leaflets, and the smaller schools have duplicated sheets. These suggest study methods, emphasize the need for a regular time-table, tell how the written work is to be set out and draw attention to postal regulations.

In the Queensland booklet psychological problems, such as left-handedness and stammering are discussed and the broader activities of the school (such as the facilities for dental treatment and the Junior Red Cross Circle) are outlined. From the beginning, the outback family is introduced to the varied aspects of correspondence work and the supervisor is shown how she can best assist the child. Successful co-operation with the parents is probably the most vital aspect of correspondence instruction.

The Use of Radio

The use of radio for special broadcasts to schools has two aspects; there are the broadcasts which are primarily intended

¹ In Western Australia, the employment of paid supervisors is common, as the education department pays an allowance of £15 per annum for each child instructed. When the pupil is aged twelve years the supervisor's allowance is discontinued, but the pupil living away from home may receive an allowance of £15-50.

for children in the ordinary schools but which are used by out-back children; and there are others specially designed for correspondence pupils. For broadcasts to ordinary schools an hour a day is allotted for about 42 weeks of the year by the Australian Broadcasting Commission. Four sessions ("Health and Hygiene," "The World We Live In," "French for Schools," and "Music Through Movement") are broadcast in all States through the national relay system; other sessions are designed to meet the curricular needs of the State of origin only. In general, singing, literature, social studies or history, nature study, musical and art appreciation sessions are provided in all States. To encourage pupils to use these general school broadcasts, each child is supplied with the special booklet of broadcasts free of cost.

In each State there is provision for special sessions from the correspondence school so that the child can feel that he has a more direct personal contact with his teachers and that he is part of a wider community. In most States, correspondence school sessions are given once or twice a week and in Queensland there are four sessions a week. A good spokesman for the school (usually the headmaster) is selected, and he, in turn, organizes the contributions of individual teachers. Care is taken to see that some correspondence school radio time is given to formal lessons so that, at a distance at least, the pupil can hear a well-prepared and delivered lesson.

In each of the general broadcast booklets the correspondence broadcasts are outlined; further notes are forwarded to children by the correspondence school later during the year; as most units in the program can be integrated with the course of study, children are urged to use them. The schools naturally report that the greatest value of the broadcast lessons is for training in speech, both through phonics and the example of good speakers, and for singing and lessons in musical appreciation. Formerly such work was beyond the scope of the correspondence schools. One lesson which is reported to have been successful in Queensland is the giving of dictation, notation and mental arithmetic by radio. This session has proved helpful to home supervisors in the handling of these subjects. The request sessions in which the supervisor answers questions are very popular.

In Victoria, where only two sessions a week, of 20 and 15 minutes, are available, the first session is usually divided into three parts:

- (a) school tables and lessons
- (b) music
- (c) speech training.

The shorter session is usually devoted either to dramatizations or to interviews with visitors to the State.

In Queensland, owing to the difficulty of daylight reception in remote places, many children were unable to hear the transmissions. To remedy this condition, an additional short-wave channel was supplied by the A.B.C., and at present all the regional stations and the short-wave stations co-operate to give the most efficient transmission the State can provide. It is estimated that about 2,500 families or 10,000 listeners hear these broadcasts regularly.

In New South Wales special broadcasts from Blackfriars began in the same year as those to ordinary pupils (1933). Their value in supplementing the work of the leaflets in such subjects as phonics, reading, and oral composition, and for the discussion of current topics, which by reason of their transitory nature could not well be included in the general leaflets, is undoubted.

In Tasmania, a special teacher now devotes half her time to the arrangement of correspondence school broadcasts. This arrangement has proved more satisfactory than having a group of teachers prepare broadcasts in turn. In these sessions some of the more interesting letters received from overseas pen friends are read. One broadcast which aroused interest was on "Collections." This resulted in the formation of the nucleus of a museum when pupils forwarded exhibits of pressed flowers, shells, and a snake. Children keep broadcast note books (in which the illustrations are often of a high standard) and forward these monthly for correction.

Libraries

In all States there has been an increasing appreciation of the value of wider reading for correspondence pupils. In four States, correspondence school libraries, built up by the donations of parents and pupils, have existed for many years, and the encouragement of wider reading habits has been an essential part of the training. In New South Wales general library facilities have been developed to a more limited extent, and the Queensland library is at present being formed. In Queensland, 2,000 library books have been purchased through donations and the government subsidy. In this scheme postage both ways will be paid by the school.

South Australia: In South Australia, children are also encouraged to join the Public Library's lending service for country people. This book collection, with 25,000 volumes, caters for all ranges of age and taste. Children's books, graded according to age, are forwarded two at a time, and may be held for one month.

Western Australia: During recent years the school library in Western Australia has been considerably expanded. It now consists of more than 4,000 carefully selected books. The library is maintained by an annual departmental grant, and by donations from parents and friends. It is organized in three sections, junior, intermediate and senior — each under the charge of a teacher-librarian. Pupils are encouraged to read as widely as possible, and books are issued as often as required. A special section has been developed to meet the needs of ex-students, who are encouraged to continue with directed reading after they have completed their courses.

Tasmania: In Tasmania, the library has always been a popular feature of the school work. In addition to the school's library, 400 books are loaned yearly from the Lady Clarke Library, and special reference books are obtained from the Education Department's Schools' Library to meet special requests. The appointment of a special teacher to take charge of the library in 1947 has proved very successful. At present, a circular is sent with each parcel of books. On this the children name the book they liked best and the type they would prefer to be sent next time. At intervals through the year book talks are given by the librarian during the schools broadcasts. In the first nine months of 1948, 9,203 books were issued, to an average of 227 pupils weekly.

Other Activities

In each correspondence school there are other features which may be compared with the extra-curricular activities of an ordinary school. Some of these, such as the raising of funds for patriotic or charitable purposes, are not related to the curricula or methods of the school; others, such as the bird or tree clubs, might also be considered a part of the work in nature study. However, as these activities are purely voluntary, although they probably are a valuable part of the educational process, they will be deferred until the following chapter.

VII

SOME SPECIAL ASPECTS OF CORRESPONDENCE WORK

The Personal Side

All who have had anything to do with the work of the correspondence schools agree that the most pleasing and perhaps the most essential aspect of their activities is to be found in the friendly personal relationships existing between teachers, pupils, and parents. The correspondence teachers know the pupils whom they have never or rarely seen, better than the average teacher of the city class knows his or her pupils. It is possible to conceive of correspondence work being carried on in a stiff, formal and impersonal manner, but it is impossible to suppose that such work would have achieved anything like the numerical and educational success which has come to the Australian correspondence schools.

The encouragement of personal friendliness between teacher and pupil is not at all incompatible with insistence on hard work and high standards. The average child will always do better work when his motive is to win the teacher's commendation rather than to avoid his wrath. Many class teachers have amply proved these points in their own work, but their further demonstration in a wholesale way by the correspondence schools is one of a number of lessons which they have to offer education in general.

Although their methods differ in detail, all the States have emphasized this personal side of their work. Pupils are encouraged not only to send in their work, but to send photographs and to forward letters giving details of themselves, of the conditions under which they are living and working, of their interests and leisure occupations, and so on. Some of the schools make a special feature of sending personal letters to the child's parents. In all the correspondence schools the comments on corrected work are of a personal character. Special credit stamps are used to encourage good work in some States. Purely personal letters are written by the teachers; in some States these accompany each set of corrected work, in other States they go to each pupil under the teacher's care in rotation, and in other States they are sent in a less systematic way. The personal letters of children are usually preserved and passed on to the next teacher dealing with the child. In most of the States, children are specially encouraged to visit the correspondence centre, if at any time they are in the city with their parents, and most

endeavour to foster the idea of the school as a corporate entity through the school badge and motto. In several of the States it is not at all uncommon for the teachers to be invited to spend their holidays at the homes of their pupils, and for these invitations to be accepted. Until 1941 Queensland sent a Christmas book to each child. After being suspended for three years, this activity was revived in 1945.

All the correspondence schools try to enrich the lives of their pupils by encouraging them to participate in a wide variety of voluntary activities which form a means of public service. Some of these activities are outlined in the following pages, not in full or in any particular order, but merely as examples of the wider activities fostered by correspondence schools. In a number of cases the organizations are controlled by outside bodies; in others the activity is restricted to the school in a particular State; in both cases the organization is brought to the notice of pupils through the school magazine. In general, it may be said that these activities are directed to the primary rather than to the secondary pupils.

Donations to Charity

All the correspondence schools have donated large sums to civilian charities and, during the war years, to the patriotic and comforts funds. From 1925 to 1946 the pupils and staff of Blackfriars contributed almost £3,000 to the Correspondence School Hospital Fund which assists the Children's Hospital, the Far West Scheme, and Stewart House Preventorium; the latter two organizations bring outback children to the beach to build up their health. During the war period the pupils and staff were very active. Besides providing regular comforts for the hundreds of ex-pupils in the services, raising funds for special appeals, knitting and sewing for the Comforts Fund and despatching thousands of canteen orders, the school donated two fully-equipped ambulances. The total contribution made during the war period was approximately £7,000. Since the war, large donations for Anzac House, Food for Britain, and the United Nations Appeal for Children to the value of £2,000 have been made.

In Queensland, early in the war, the children decided to forgo the book prizes which each had formerly received annually, and also to raise other funds for patriotic purposes by holiday tasks, the sale of farm and garden produce, concerts and home entertainments. By 1944 the correspondence school had raised sufficient money to provide two complete mobile canteens for the army. In addition, the Junior Red Cross Circle has contributed thousands of articles to charitable homes, to

hospitals, and to the needy overseas, especially in England and Greece.

The South Australian correspondence school contributed to the Schools Patriotic Funds. Cash donations amounted to nearly £1,800 and waste products to a value of £2,000 were forwarded for sale. In addition, many Red Cross parcels were prepared and thousands of skeins of wool were knitted. In 1947 the children donated several hundred pounds in a 'Food for Britain' appeal. Cards with the giver's name and address were included in parcels sent to British schools, and it was hoped that the acknowledgements would start many pen-friendships.

In Tasmania this sequence was reversed. The children have pen friends in England, Alberta, South Africa, India, New Zealand and Holland. During recent years parcels have been sent regularly to all pen friends in England from the money donated by the children and the staff.

In other States the children and their parents have donated to worthwhile charities, both to war-time welfare funds, to hospitals and to appeals for the needy in overseas countries.

The School Magazine

Most of the primary correspondence schools issue an annual magazine which, in some cases, has exceeded one hundred quarto pages. The major part of each is occupied with the contributions of pupils themselves. There is a selection of short paragraphs and verses submitted by children of each age and grade; there are also photographs and sketches. Each magazine contains an account of the extra-curricular activities of the school and the doings of former pupils. In these pages the pupil can read with pride the advances made by his predecessors, in some cases as far as university graduation, and those whose interests lie in that direction can see that the path to academic and professional distinction lies open. The magazines seem a potent factor in developing the literary and artistic interests of pupils.

Lone Scouts and Guides

The Boy Scouts and Girl Guides Associations are too well-known to require any introduction, but the enlistment of boys and girls who cannot join a troop into the Lone Scouts and Lone Guides organization is less publicized. The volunteers are formed into patrols, and receive their training through the mail box. Occasionally the captain or lieutenant of each company visits the homes of the lone guides and administers tests for badges. A monthly newsletter gives information and instruction, tells of the progress of guides and scouts in all parts of the world, and acts as a connecting link between members.

In pre-war years occasional camps were held. In New South Wales, for example, thirty lone scouts held an eight-day camp on the Nepean River, near Sydney, in 1938.

The Gould League of Bird Lovers

This body was formed in a New South Wales school in 1910 by the Headmaster and Mr. W. Finigan, and in its first quarter-century enrolled more than three-quarters of a million members in New South Wales. The aims of the league are to protect all except noxious birds and to disseminate knowledge of Australian bird-life. Each member pays one penny per year and receives in return a card depicting Australian flowers and birds. Every year when the membership is renewed a fresh card is sent. A recent activity has been the drive to persuade country members to have their properties proclaimed as bird sanctuaries. A strong branch of the league exists in Tasmania. Twenty-five per cent. of the pupils are members and many others contribute articles on bird life to the magazine. Keen interest is displayed in the annual competitions and a popular radio session is the identification of bird calls.

Religious Instruction by Correspondence

Most¹ State education departments do not provide religious instruction by correspondence, but most of the schools (through announcements in their magazines) encourage pupils to link up with a correspondence Sunday School run by their own religious denomination. All the larger churches, both Catholic and Protestant, have organized this work in several States, and there is also an undenominational movement which covers all States. The purpose of the instruction is to minister to the spiritual needs of isolated children who are unable to attend a Sunday school or a church service.

Each denomination has a series of carefully graded lessons covering at least the needs of children aged 5 to 16 years. Some bodies favour the return of written work which forms the basis of awards of annual certificates; other schools prefer to minimize written lessons and emphasize Bible reading and adapted stories.

All written work is corrected by voluntary part-time workers, usually in the capital cities, but sometimes in diocesan centres. No accurate estimate of the numbers who receive and use these lessons can be provided, but it seems that the numbers would amount to tens of thousands and that several hundred voluntary workers are needed to handle the weekly mail.

¹ Tasmania regularly sends scripture lessons to the pupils.

Even apart from the spiritual value of this work, its educational worth is undoubted; in addition to the lessons themselves, other reading matter, attractively illustrated, with city or ocean scenes, is provided through periodical magazines.

Post-War Developments in Western Australia

Although the personal bond has been strengthened in recent years through the development of broadcasting, the correspondence schools are continuing to seek additional means of increasing the contacts between home and school. Two experiments in this field have proved successful in Western Australia.

In 1946 an itinerant teacher was appointed to one of the sparsely settled northern areas. Several times a year he visits each home, for periods ranging from several days to a week, to assist and encourage the children with their lessons, and to advise and help the parents. He travels in a covered utility truck and carries with him school equipment, including a portable library, a strip projector and a film strip library. In convenient localities the children now gather at a centrally situated home and experience class instruction. In 1947 the teacher travelled about 7,000 miles, and paid at least two visits to all homes in his district. This personal contact is reported to have been highly beneficial to the pupils and was greatly appreciated by the parents. At the beginning of 1949 an additional teacher will be appointed to another sparsely populated area.

In 1946, the education department inaugurated summer camp schools to enable country pupils, including some from the correspondence classes, to visit the seaside and to participate in community school life for a few weeks. The mornings were devoted to ordinary school subjects and the afternoons to organized recreation, excursions and other outdoor activities. Seven of these schools were conducted last summer.

One of the most striking developments of the correspondence system in Western Australia during the recent years has been the help it has afforded to physically handicapped children, especially those in the metropolitan area. Personal contact is made with all metropolitan pupils; two visiting teachers pay weekly visits to every home. Close co-operation is maintained between the correspondence classes and the social departments of the hospitals. In this way the correspondence classes are kept informed of convalescent children needing help.

Special Features in Victoria

The Invalid Section: It will be noticed that the Victorian correspondence school contains a larger proportion of invalids than

do most of the other schools. This is in part due to the high reputation of the special invalid section. This section was formed shortly after the poliomyelitis epidemic in 1937-8 to meet the needs of the large number of crippled children; special teachers appointed to this section have modified the assignments so that writing would be cut to a minimum.

At present the full course in English and Arithmetic is taken, but it is optional for pupils to answer questions in History or Geography and any such questions, as far as possible, require only a one-word answer. A very high proportion of the children return this optional work. The fortnight's assignments are further divided into daily assignments.

Among the children enrolled are a number of spastics. Special wooden material has been constructed by the teachers to prepare these pupils to hold pencils, and there is frequent consultation with parents.

The Health and Recreation Camp: In November, 1948, 43 correspondence pupils (aged 10-14 years) attended a twelve-day camp at a seaside resort near Melbourne. In 1947 the Victorian Education Department began to use this former army camp as a health and recreation centre for pupils selected by district inspectors. There is a trained permanent camp staff, specialist teachers in physical education, and on this occasion, teachers from the correspondence school accompanied the children. The total charge, including train and bus fares, was 30/- per child.

Special Features in Tasmania

The Liaison Officer: In 1947 a liaison officer was appointed to the correspondence school to strengthen the bonds between pupils, parents and teachers by visiting families and helping in every way possible. He has contacted a number of new pupils who might not otherwise have bothered to enrol, and his reports on the ill-health or neglect of children have allowed departmental action to be taken.

VIII

THE ATTAINMENTS AND PROGRESS OF CORRESPONDENCE PUPILS

A precise comparison of the progress of correspondence and ordinary school pupils is practically out of the question. It would require at least the selection of a large group of correspondence pupils who had never attended day school, the application to this group of standardized tests of intelligence and of attainment and a comparison of the results with those of children in ordinary schools who were of the same age and equal ability and who started school at approximately the same age. Although no objective evidence of this nature is available, or seems likely to be available, it has been possible to secure information which throws some light on the attainments and progress of correspondence pupils.

The Ages of Correspondence Pupils

Table XIII compares the mean ages of pupils in the same grade in ordinary and correspondence schools. These State averages are calculated from the age-grade tables prepared by the State education departments. In computing the average ages in each correspondence school grade, pupils older than 18 years have not been included.

From these tables it will be seen that in every grade the mean age of correspondence pupils is higher, sometimes a year higher than that of the school population as a whole. In part these differences are due to the later age at which children start in the correspondence school,¹ differences which are reflected in the mean age of the first class. This difference varies from a few months in Queensland to 15 months in Tasmania. There may be a greater tendency to keep correspondence children in the first grade for a longer time than one year, but it seems that in most States correspondence pupils do enrol at a later age than pupils in day schools.

Another feature of Table XIII is that the difference between the two averages widens in the middle grades. With a constant school population and annual promotions the difference from grade to grade should be about one year; this would also apply if a constant proportion of children were retarded each year. On

¹ If children join the Queensland correspondence school at a more advanced age, an effort is made to accelerate their work so that they will have completed the seventh grade work before they reach the age of fourteen years.

TABLE XIII
COMPARATIVE AGE-GRADE LEVELS FOR
CORRESPONDENCE AND ALL PRIMARY SCHOOLS
(In years and months at 30 June 1946)

N.S.W.		Vic.		Q ^{ld.}		S.A.		W.A.		Tas.	
State	Corr.	State	Corr.	State	Corr.	State	Corr.	State	Corr.	State	Corr.
I 6.8	7.3	I 6.2	6.10	{ <div> P1 P2 P3 6.5 P4 </div>	6.7	I 6.1	6.8	Inf. 6.4	7.0	I 6.6	7.9
II 7.10	8.7	II 7.5	8.3		8.6	II 7.2	7.7	I 7.5	8.2	II 8.0	9.3
III 9.0	9.9	III 8.5	9.6		9.6	III 8.4	8.10	II 8.6	9.4	III 9.2	10.3
IV 10.0	10.9	IV 9.6	10.8		10.10	IV 9.6	10.2	III 9.7	10.3	IV 10.4	11.5
V 11.2	12.1	V 10.6	11.10		11.9	V 10.7	11.3	IV 10.8	11.6	V 11.5	12.4
VI 12.1	12.11	VI 11.6	13.1		12.9	VI 11.7	12.5	V 11.8	12.7*	VI 12.6	13.5
					13.5	VII 12.7	14.0	VI 12.8	13.7*		
					14.5						

*An estimate which allows for the number of students probably over the age of 18 years.

the other hand, if some form of ability grouping is practised or if retardations occur more often at certain levels, the intervals may be larger. In most States it will be noticed that the intervals are more than one year in the lowest grades, but that in the upper grades, when the older and duller children tend to leave, the interval may be less than one year.

An examination of the intervals between successive grades of ordinary and correspondence schools shows that there is a considerable variation among the States in the relative intervals between successive grades. Thus, in New South Wales and Tasmania, there is practically no greater retardation in correspondence school children from one grade to the next than in ordinary school pupils. Some of this may be due to the presence of ill and crippled children who naturally could not be expected to proceed at the same rate as healthy pupils; in part it is due to the presence of older pupils who, at a late stage, have realized the benefits of literacy. Also in view of the high rate of pupil turnover in all correspondence schools, studies of average ages have less meaning than they would for the whole State.

No official figures are published which give the mean age of children in the small schools of Australia, but it has been possible to calculate the ages of children in three grades in one-teacher schools tested in 1946 in a survey conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research. The Queensland and South Australian samples, which conformed most closely to the published State age-grade distributions, follow.

TABLE XIV
COMPARATIVE AGE-GRADE LEVELS, 1946, IN ALL
STATES, ONE-TEACHER AND CORRESPONDENCE
SCHOOLS

(In years and months)

Grade	Queensland			Grade	South Australia		
	State	One-teacher Schools	Corres. Schools		State	One-teacher Schools	Corres. Schools
III	10.2	10.4	10.10	IV	9.6	10.2	10.2
IV	11.1	11.5	11.9	V	10.7	11.0	11.3
V	11.11	12.1	12.9	VI*	11.7	11.8	12.5

The Opinions of Head Teachers

In 1947 a questionnaire sent to headmasters of correspondence schools in all States contained a number of questions relating to the quality of work and the rate of promotion in correspondence schools. There was general agreement on the wide ranges

of quality and interest but all felt that the average standard was above that of the ordinary day school, provided the child had been a pupil long enough to become familiar with the methods, and provided the supervision was thorough. In most schools it was stated that the rate of promotion was slower than normal in all grades; in Queensland it was said to be normal. In this State only 480 pupils who had been in a class for the past year had not completed it. This figure represents less than ten per cent. of the normal enrolment. In Western Australia at least 80 per cent. of the pupils gain promotion in twelve months and the others take slightly longer. In Tasmania 34 pupils had been in a class for the previous year without completing it. These percentages are probably little, if at all, inferior to those of ordinary schools. The head-teachers of four schools were able to supply the number of children in each grade who had been promoted to a higher grade in 1946. For purposes of comparison these figures are shown in Table XV as a percentage of the number of pupils in each grade under the age of 18 years shown in the age-grade table (or of net enrolment) for the year.

TABLE XV
PERCENTAGES OF PUPILS COMPLETING WORK FOR
A GRADE, 1946

N S W.		Vic.		Q'd.		Tas.	
Grade	%	Grade	%	Grade	%	Grade	%
I	70	I	70	P	100		
II	90	II	80	I	70	I	30
III	80	III	80	II	70	II	20
IV	80	IV	60	III	60	III	40
V	60	V	60	IV	70	IV	10
VI	90	VI	70	V	50	V	10
		VII	70	VI	70	VI	20
		VIII	90	VII	60	VII	10
School average ..	75		70		85		25*

*These figures should be treated with caution. As Table V shows, there is a higher pupil turnover in Tasmania. It seems that about 70% of those in the school for a year complete the work of the grade.

As the foregoing figures contain many possible factors of error and as the numbers completing the work in any grade vary from year to year, the proportions in each grade are expressed only to the nearest ten per cent. and the State proportions only to the nearest five per cent.

Another fact to emerge from a comparison of the above figures with those for the year ending July 1948, is that the above proportions over-estimate the number of pupils who fail

to complete a grade's work in twelve months. In Queensland only 480 had not completed the year's work by June 1948, whereas the above figures suggest that about 900 did not do so in 1946. In Tasmania the respective numbers are 34 for 1948 as against a theoretical total of 250 for 1946. These differences are to be explained by the pupil turnover. Many pupils do not remain for one year in the correspondence school and so the fact that they do not secure a promotion is not a valid criticism of the correspondence school.

Results in Examinations

Until recently, an external examination at the conclusion of the primary course had been one of the features of the Australian system of education; though the correspondence schools have not over-stressed the importance of these examinations, many pupils have expressed the desire to enter for them and their results give some indication of the effectiveness of this form of instruction for pupils who are keen to study.

Of the 205 correspondence school pupils presented in South Australia, during the seven years 1935-1941, 198 gained the Qualifying Certificate, which entitled them to attend a high school; in the last three years of this period eight exhibitions were gained. Of the 27 who passed the Qualifying Examination in 1939, 13 had received their entire education by correspondence and four of these distinguished themselves by gaining over 600 marks out of a possible 700.

Mr. Carter, in his study of correspondence tuition in Queensland, analyzed the results of the scholarship examination in 1942 and found that a slightly higher percentage of passes was obtained by correspondence pupils than for the State as a whole. He reports the case of one girl who, in 1941, had been fourth in her class in one of the foremost Brisbane schools, was evacuated early in 1942, and received all her seventh grade teaching by correspondence. At the end of the year she received 81.5 per cent. in the Scholarship Examinations, a result which would probably place her above the 95th percentile. As her achievements under both types of tuition were available for comparison it was interesting to find that in her sixth grade year, with oral teaching, she had received almost the same marks as she had gained during her correspondence year. He holds that these results support the claim made by teachers that intelligent children do as well by correspondence as by oral tuition. In 1944 a correspondence pupil received the highest marks in the scholarship examination. Results supplied by the Queensland Education Department show that at the scholarship examinations in 1946 and 1947 the percentage of passes obtained by the corre-

spendence school was slightly lower than the percentage of passes for the whole State. However, during the past ten years all students in the correspondence school who desired to sit for the examination were entered; there was no culling of those whose success was doubtful.

At the secondary level there are at least two external examinations in the three years preceding matriculation, and most of the pupils in academic secondary courses are preparing for these. Some are studying full-time and others are doing only one or two subjects a year. Since conditions are so different there is little value in comparing the examination results of ordinary secondary and correspondence schools. The correspondence schools have found that their percentage of passes has been higher than the State average in some subjects and lower in others. Results fluctuate from year to year.

All secondary correspondence schools have students of whose success they are proud. In 1944 one South Australian boy who had received his whole education by correspondence was successful in the Leaving Examination. A Queensland boy who received all his primary education by correspondence gained top place in the Senior Public examination and is now the doctor-in-charge of a Brisbane Hospital. New South Wales numbers among its pupils a Professor of Psychology; all States can point to other pupils who have achieved distinction.

IX TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

Historical

Since 1939, unprecedented development has occurred in technical correspondence education: there is now a training centre in every State; the range of courses, already extensive, is widening every month; and enrolments are now recorded in thousands. Whilst the number of students will progressively decline as the reconstruction training scheme proceeds towards its logical conclusion, the facilities of courses, trained tutorial staff, and experienced supervisors will presumably expand civilian activities beyond the pre-war level.

Before the war technical education by correspondence was designed to serve four groups of students.

1. Apprentices in rural areas who were either required by law or expected by their employers to undertake courses
2. Past students of the technical colleges who were completing their studies after being transferred to the country or who were undertaking other courses
3. Part-time students at a technical college who were unable to attend some lectures; and
4. Students with practical experience, but limited general education, who were preparing for entry to a college

In 1939 the number of students enrolled in all these categories in all States probably did not exceed three thousand. During the war years the number of enrolments multiplied many times for, in addition to former class students who chose to continue their studies in this way, the education schemes of the armed services encouraged the use of these courses to maintain morale in isolated sectors where boredom was the chief enemy. More than one hundred thousand servicemen, Australian and allied, received courses and had their assignments corrected. Since demobilization more than 60,000 discharged servicemen have undertaken, or are continuing with, courses under the reconstruction training scheme.

The changes in the correspondence structure are more fundamental than the surface changes in numbers of staff, students and courses or the amount of accommodation or premises available. They extend to the prestige of this section of education, to the attitude of staff and students to their work, and to the respective financial responsibilities of the State and Commonwealth authorities. As the changes in the technical correspondence system during the past ten years have largely been due to the ramifications of the reconstruction training scheme these topics will be discussed later.

New South Wales: Correspondence teaching from the Sydney Technical College was inaugurated in 1910 when a course in Sanitary Inspection commenced with an enrolment of approximately 40 pupils. During the next fifteen years other correspondence courses were made available to those residing out of reach of a technical college or trades school in which similar classes were in operation.

Before 1927 the fees for courses were £2 2s. per term for senior pupils and £1 1s. for juniors; in addition, the student paid the cost of postage. In that year the fees were reduced¹ to the level charged in technical colleges and trade schools, where the fees were 8/- and 4/- respectively.

This was followed by a rapid increase in the number of enrolments. The figures for the years 1926-28 were 348, 389, and 707 respectively. The increase was fairly general, but was greatest in Agriculture, Sheep and Wool, Meat Inspecting and Sanitary Inspecting.

In 1933, twenty-six correspondence courses were available from the Sydney Technical College; these included pastoral courses such as Wool Classing and Care of Animals, trade courses such as Sewer Plumbing and Construction Drawing, commercial courses such as Shorthand and Business Principles, courses such as Meat Inspection and Local Government Law for State officials, and academic courses in English and Arithmetic.

In 1939 the system was re-organized by the establishment of a Correspondence Teaching Division to co-ordinate the oral and correspondence instruction in those rural centres where vocational courses were provided for a small number of students; also the correspondence courses were appropriately grouped with the oral courses of technical education and placed under the lecturer-in-charge, who exercised the same control over correspondence as over oral teaching. In 1939 the enrolment in correspondence courses had increased to 1,300.

After the outbreak of war the correspondence teaching division was called upon to supply instruction on a previously un-thought-of scale. Enrolments climbed with such speed that, at the end of 1944, approximately 100,000 students, including 43,000 American servicemen, were enrolled.

In 1947, the enrolment of civilians, as distinct from C.R.T.S.² trainees, was 2,600 students covering approximately 4,300 subject enrolments. The staff included 140 teachers and the number

¹ During the depression fees were still further reduced and, in addition, students unable to pay fees were permitted to defer payment until they secured regular employment.

² Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme.

of subjects was 160. An interesting trend was the increasing number of adults seeking correspondence instruction.

Victoria: The origins and early development of the technical correspondence school in Victoria are uncertain, but it seems that it began as a branch of the Melbourne Technical College to meet the needs of discharged servicemen soon after 1918.

During 1919 and 1920 there was a rapid expansion in numbers; to meet the demand the school purchased instruction papers from a private correspondence school. In the following year when the Repatriation Department started its own school for ex-servicemen and made a direct agreement with private schools, the enrolments fell steeply and the revenue from fees fell to one-eighth of what it had been the previous year. As the school was not responsible for administering a compulsory apprenticeship scheme the number of enrolments remained low until 1926, when there was a sudden interest in mechanical and commercial courses. This increase was maintained until the depression years.

In 1921, 27 courses were in use, and of these almost one-half had been purchased from a private college; by 1929 almost one hundred courses were available.

After 1929 the number of enrolments fell; with the need for economy, many courses became out-of-date through lack of revision. Ten years later the courses and methods were obsolete.

In 1939 a reorganization of the section began, and when the flood of service enrolments came in 1942 the school was ready to expand. Eighty-eight courses were available; of these over one-third were new and one-half of the old courses had been re-written; in the same year the staff included 40 full or part-time workers.

Enrolments during the early period and the decline and recovery of the school are well illustrated by the enrolment figures.

1921	..	..	..	..	116	•	1935	..	..	..	..	215
1923	..	..	..	..	121		1937	..	..	..	..	277
1925	..	..	..	..	200		1939	..	..	..	..	192
1927	..	..	..	..	946		1941	..	..	..	..	443
1929	..	..	..	..	997	•	1942	..	..	..	..	1751

Queensland: Queensland technical correspondence courses were established in 1926 to assist electrical apprentices who were unable to attend the part-time classes held in technical colleges. All electrical workers were legally required to hold Certificates of Competency (granted after examination by the Electrical

Workers' Board); to be eligible to sit for this examination, apprentices must have passed the fourth-year Apprenticeship Examination. As classes for the training of electrical apprentices were held only in the Central Technical College, Brisbane, it was necessary to provide courses of instruction outside the metropolitan area. In view of the expense involved in equipping workshops and appointing specialist teachers, it was decided to provide correspondence courses.

In 1928 the courses were used by 102 electrical apprentices and by 107 printing apprentices. At this early stage the apprenticeship executive considered the results so satisfactory that it was urging the education department to extend the system to fitting and turning apprentices engaged in sugar mills. However, with the onset of the depression, the demand for apprentices decreased, and in 1932 only 162 students were enrolled.

By 1938 enrolments had again expanded and extra courses were provided. The number of apprentices taking correspondence courses was 580, of whom 101 were in the printing trades, 239 in the electrical and 240 in the mechanical trades. The mechanical courses had begun in 1936 with instruction in fitting and turning, motor mechanics, boiler making, pattern making and moulding. In addition, a course for pharmacy students had been inaugurated in 1937. Lessons and tests had been issued for the early years of the course so that students would be required to spend only the final year in Brisbane for advanced practical work.

With the declaration of war and the resulting demand for tradesmen, the number of apprentices increased rapidly and training was provided for members of the forces. In January, 1946, the Brisbane Technical Correspondence School took over the apprenticeship classes from the Technical College. However, the Technical College has continued to supply correspondence courses for Diploma students.

Other States: In other States there was little technical education by correspondence before 1944 and in all cases numbers were small. In South Australia, the tuition carried on through the South Australian School of Arts and Crafts has already been mentioned in Chapter II.

In Western Australia correspondence tuition in technical subjects has been organized under a self-supporting classes scheme by which classes were established when students were prepared to subscribe the whole of the funds required and were discontinued when the demand declined. In 1935 new courses were commenced for art students, for officers of country road

boards and municipalities, and classes were recommended for apprentices of the postal departments. In 1940 courses in the printing trades began to operate. Before 1944 the scope of the work seems to have been limited to a small number of apprentices in a few trades, for, during the years 1942-4, only six correspondence courses were operating.

The Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme

Historical: The inauguration of the Commonwealth reconstruction training scheme on 1 January 1944 marks the beginning of a new era in the history of technical correspondence education in Australia; the number of correspondence students multiplied rapidly, new schools were established in four States, and there was an increase in the number of courses available. Though the new schools offered academic courses on levels comparable to those provided by the existing primary and secondary correspondence schools, such courses formed only a small part of the work and usually had a more direct vocational bias. To understand the reasons for this sudden expansion it is necessary to consider events several years earlier.

On the establishment of the Australian Army Education Service late in 1941 (followed soon after by similar Air Force and Navy Services) it was faced with the problem of providing courses of training for personnel widely dispersed and liable to sudden movements; in such circumstances any general education scheme would be forced to rely on correspondence teaching. At this time only the correspondence branches of the technical colleges in Sydney and Melbourne had experience in teaching adults over a wide range of courses, but neither institution was equipped to meet immediately all demands of the services.

Until the end of 1943, the two institutions, under increasing pressure, provided the greater part of correspondence training to service personnel of whom approximately 25,000 were enrolled; in addition, Sydney provided courses for the American forces stationed in the south-west Pacific area.

In January 1944, the Commonwealth government, through the Industrial Training Division of the Department of Labour and National Service, assumed general responsibility for the technical type training of serving members of the forces and of discharged servicemen. Pressure in the Sydney and Melbourne technical colleges had been so severe that for a time Melbourne had limited its intake and Sydney had fallen into arrears with enrolments. To relieve the pressure, and to ensure local provision in each State for the demobilization demand,

The differences in numbers can be explained partly in terms of the relative size of the three services and partly by the higher educational standards required by the R.A.A.F. Thousands of other servicemen had received courses through Sydney and Melbourne before 1944.

The size of the reconstruction training scheme is illustrated in Table XVI. (These figures include students who have received courses through the primary and secondary correspondence schools).

TABLE XVI
STUDENTS ENROLLED FROM 1 JANUARY 1944 TO
28 MAY 1948

<i>State</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
N.S.W.	16,486	1,281	17,767
Vic.	14,508	497	15,005
Q'ld.	10,296	702	10,998
S.A.	7,952	151	8,103
W.A.	7,608	408	8,016
Tas.	1,941	70	2,011
TOTAL	58,791	3,109	61,900

The scope of technical correspondence education embraces virtually all courses not of university type¹ taught by correspondence. In New South Wales, Western Australia and Tasmania, the school provides the matriculation courses that are not as yet offered by the secondary correspondence school; students are prepared for the accountancy examinations, and a wide range of practical and trade subjects is offered. The technical correspondence schools also prepare apprentices in such subjects as Pharmacy, Fitting and Turning and in the electrical trades.

The Results of Instruction: Since the time limits set for courses, in most cases, have not yet expired, it is still too early to assess the results of the reconstruction training scheme. A small percentage of all students have completed their courses and an even smaller percentage have formally abandoned them. When an assessment is practicable later the results will not be measurable by the same educational or financial yardsticks that would be applied in normal years. In any project, undertaken voluntarily by adults, which requires sustained effort over a period, there tends to be a considerable wastage. The ex-serviceman, faced with the need to re-adjust himself to his civilian employment and possibly to the responsibilities of marriage and securing or maintaining a home, suffering in some cases from dis-

¹ In 1948 the South Australian technical correspondence school offered tuition in university subjects.

abilities and developing new interests, has many difficulties to surmount in completing the course.

All States have been able to report the success of correspondence pupils especially in commercial subjects; though examination results are by no means the sole test of success they show that the standard of instruction in State technical correspondence schools compares favourably with that of institutions of any other kind.

There are a number of students who have virtually completed their courses (e.g., in Book-keeping), but who, instead of completing the final two test papers, sit for an external examination. Other students have started courses in practical subjects, have gained experience on the job and have not completed the courses; some students in the Journalism and Story Writing courses have had their work accepted for publication and have felt competent to continue on their own.

To evaluate the work of these schools in terms of examination honours or the percentage of passes and failures, or of the non-completion of courses, would be to overlook the function of the reconstruction training scheme. It seems preferable to take the view that each subject completed by a trainee has contributed to that extent towards his betterment and that the unfinished course should be regarded as a partial success rather than as a complete failure.

Technical Correspondence Schools Today

Administrative Aspects: Though education is essentially a domestic concern of each State, the limitation of the taxing powers of the States during the war years and the rapid increase in the Commonwealth revenue have resulted in the Commonwealth government undertaking services, or financing services, that had formerly been left to the States. The second of these alternatives occurred in the establishment of the technical training schools. To meet the war-time and expected post-war expansion of demand, the Commonwealth contributed to the initial expenses of the new technical correspondence schools. Premises were obtained, office equipment was secured, the cost of preparing new courses was paid and other expenses were met by the Commonwealth. The schools were staffed and administered by the State Education Departments and the State superintendent of technical education also held the office of State deputy-director of the Industrial Training Division. The Division maintained a more direct contact through the relations of its inspector with the State supervisor.

This Commonwealth-States relationship may be compared with that of the old English Board of Education and the Local

Education Authorities. Though direction from the Industrial Training Division is necessarily definite in matters of finance and the policy has been to encourage uniformity in routine or administrative features (such as layout of handbooks and the classification of courses), flexibility which will leave scope for adaptation to local needs and conditions is encouraged.

Each State correspondence school functions in a dual capacity; it is a State educational institution which supplies vocational training and adult education services to fee-paying civilians,¹ and it is also a training centre for service and ex-service personnel under the reconstruction training scheme. In the second case the Commonwealth pays the fees. In effect, therefore, there are six State technical correspondence schools of similar pattern, co-ordinated appropriately for the purpose of the reconstruction training scheme, but each pursuing otherwise its own local objective.

In some States the technical correspondence schools may be considered extension departments of the Technical Colleges, as they conduct, by correspondence, courses available also by the class method, and prepare students for the same examinations, both internal and external. Close contact is maintained with such examining bodies and associations as the various Accountancy and Bankers' Institutes, the Nurses' Board and Apprenticeship Boards.

Pupils Enrolled: In general, it may be said that there are few barriers to enrolment in a technical correspondence course, beyond willingness to pay the small fee. The fees of reconstruction trainees are paid for them, but they must first have fulfilled the requirements of eligibility and suitability. Courses and subjects are classified on three levels: there are the "basic" courses, such as Book-keeping, which are open to anyone who has the necessary primary education to be able to benefit from them; there are "open" courses such as Intermediate Book-keeping which cannot be taken unless Preliminary Book-keeping has first been completed; and there are "closed" courses which may be taken only by those with pre-requisite educational and occupational qualifications.

Students in technical schools are scattered throughout the continent and beyond.² At present they are to be found as far north as Japan and as far south as a polar expedition; east into

¹ In some States apprentices are exempt from the payment of fees.

² In the 1947 *Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction, Queensland*, it is reported that "An enquiry was recently received from a native of Cyprus, who read of the school's course in Apiculture in a copy of *The Western Canadian Beekeeper*."

the Pacific and west to the Malay States. Their occupations are many and varied and their conditions of study range from the amenities of a modern city to the kerosene lamp of an out-back shack.

Staffing: As most of the instructors in the technical schools devote part of their time to correspondence and part to classroom teaching, figures of the number of staff have little meaning. In some cases the instructor with a few pupils in a specialized subject may receive only a few papers.

The Preparation of Courses: In the early years of the new technical correspondence schools the chief factor in the rapid expansion in the number of courses was the free interchange of those already available. In recent years some novel courses have been developed to meet the demands of enquirers.

All courses are compiled by experts in the appropriate field, either members of a technical college staff or external authorities. In some cases, a whole college department, under the close direction of its head, engages in the compilation. In one instance, that of the Accountancy and Secretarial Refresher course, the Australian Institutes combined in the preparation. Before a course is commenced an outline of what is proposed and a sample lesson must be submitted by the compiler and approved by the supervisor; general guidance on the best form of presentation is given, and arrangements are made for progressive sub-editing.

At each school courses are under constant revision to meet changed syllabi and to incorporate improvements suggested during the use of the course. Lesson notes are usually mimeographed at first so that emendations can be more readily made; when the content has become stable or the demand has increased, the course may be printed. In the more popular subjects the chief tutor is usually the compiler of the course; the result is an alertness to compare, to adapt, to modify assignments to meet inadequacies, and to teach by correspondence rather than merely to check papers.

Courses: The list of courses available in the early months of 1948 is shown in Plate I. It will be noticed that in addition to the trade subjects which are usually those first considered in connection with technical education, there are also commercial courses, ranging from Elementary Book-keeping to Accountancy and Secretarial Practice; in addition, there are the rural, art, literary, domestic and general academic courses. The number of enrolments is a better indication of the popularity of the accountancy and commercial courses.

TABLE XVII

ENROLMENTS IN MOST POPULAR C.R.T.S. COURSES
(to May 1948)

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Enrolment</i>
1. Book-keeping	11,461
2. Accountancy	7,415
3. Business Principles	2,480
4. Arithmetic	2,353
5. Salesmanship	2,291
6. Secretarial Practice	1,989
7. Auditing	1,828
8. Carpentry and Joinery	1,818
9. Sheep and Wool	1,707
10. English	1,689

Among these enrolments are a number of persons engaged in courses usually reserved for the other sex. Sixty-two men are learning Dressmaking and nine Home Management; women are studying Agriculture (4), Sheep and Wool (10) and Motor Maintenance (10).

Methods: The outstanding problem in the education of adults is to preserve continuity of study. Though they may begin with the best intentions, many adult students sooner or later fall into arrears with their work. The method used by the technical correspondence schools to lessen wastage is to maintain motivation. The tutors make constant direct and indirect references to the student's purpose in taking the course and to the advantage of completing it satisfactorily. The new student is given a guide on how to study before he commences, and comments on study techniques are offered during the course.

The schools have used various supplementary aids to learning. There is much attention to the quality of the illustrations and diagrams; in recent courses photographic illustration has been freely used.¹ In South Australia a travelling tutor in agriculture visits students periodically to advise them on practical problems. The itinerary is announced in advance and students meet the tutor by the roadside. One student recently travelled eighty miles to meet the tutor.

In New South Wales technical education is being brought to country towns through the mobile workshops. These are rail cars, stripped of compartments and completely re-fitted with machinery, forges, tools, benches, electrical gear and all the other equipment necessary to make them self-contained training schools for the engineering trades. Here the students can do

¹ South Australia has recently begun using silk-screen technique in combination with photography and duplication.

the practical work as though they were attending a technical college class. These mobile workshops are attended by those receiving theoretical instruction through the correspondence teaching division, and also by those who desire tuition in Fitting and Machining, Oxy-Acetylene or Electric Welding, Diesel Engine Operation, Farm Mechanics, Motor Maintenance, and similar subjects. Each train has a prescribed circuit, with regular stopping places.

Another method used by Sydney Technical College is to have intensive practical sessions of a week or a fortnight in such trades as Diesel Engine Operation, Wool Classing and others. Queensland has sponsored supervised study groups, especially for apprentices. Those in country towns meet in a local school or hall and work their assignments under the supervision of a teacher who, though he may not be an expert in all or any of the subjects, is able to advise on study methods and the setting out of work. Melbourne and Adelaide have held discussion nights for students in Journalism and Short Story Writing; a record of the proceedings was sent to country students. Adelaide also holds students' field excursions and instruction evenings in photography. Occasional talks by the supervisors have been the only use of radio, and it has been possible to use motion pictures and discussion groups only in places such as Repatriation Hospitals where large groups are assembled.

Fees: Fees vary considerably from State to State and from course to course.

In New South Wales the fee for single subjects is 25/-, and for groups of subjects taken as part of a inclusive trades course, a special scale is available. Students who are under 21 years and receive less than 30/- weekly, pay only one-half of these fees. The fees cover tuition for a maximum period of two years from the date of enrolment.

In Victoria there is a fixed fee for each subject. The most expensive are commercial art and advertising at £10 per course and the least expensive are commercial law subjects at £1, and apprenticeship courses at 10/- per term. In Queensland the fees for each subject range from £1 to £4, and courses are supplied free to apprentices. In other States the fee system is similar and the fees charged range between these extremes.

Apprenticeship

In several States apprentices who are unable to attend classes at a technical college are obliged to undertake a course of study through the correspondence school. The Queensland system is older and more comprehensive than most and presents several novel features.

Enrolments: When the rural apprentice in Queensland is allotted to an employer, the secretary of the Apprenticeship Office notifies the supervisor of the technical correspondence school and the apprentice is enrolled and issued with his first lessons. As the examinations are held in October new enrolments are not usually accepted after 30 April, but apprentices returning from war service and those with an Industrial Junior Certificate have been enrolled at any time in the year.

Courses: Each course of instruction is in accordance with the syllabus followed by the apprenticeship classes at the Central Technical College, Brisbane, and is approved under the Apprentices' and Minors' Act. As apprentices studying by correspondence sit for the same examinations as those who are able to attend classes in technical colleges, the analysis of their success and failures forms one criterion of the values of the two forms of instruction.

In the preparation of courses every effort is made to ensure that the instruction conforms with current trade practices. As far as possible the papers are prepared by tradesmen, or tradesmen who have achieved professional status; experience has shown that professional men (e.g., university graduates) sometimes overlook small, but important, points to which tradesmen would refer. Constant revision of the papers keeps them abreast of trade practices.

Class Supervisors: In country centres where there are a number of apprentices studying by correspondence, a class supervisor, usually a local teacher, may be appointed. The apprentices assemble one night each week at a local school, and during the two hours allotted for the purpose, work their test papers under the supervision of the teacher. The supervisor is not an instructor, but he can usually assist in the interpretation of test questions. The appointment of supervisors has had the effect of increasing the percentage of returns from apprentices whose work is done under supervision.

Practical Work: One of the main disadvantages of correspondence tuition with apprentices is the difficulty of arranging for the working of practical tests under supervision. Wherever possible, arrangements are made for students to do the same practical tests as would be required from those attending a technical college. Apprentice compositors are required to set up certain passages and submit "pulls" for examinations; painters are required to mix paints and send in specimens of the colours obtained for correction and comment. In other trades, e.g., motor mechanics and carpentry, complete descriptions of the methods by which practical tests were carried out are required. However, unless students gain extensive practical experience

they sometimes encounter difficulty in passing a practical examination. For example, many electrical apprentices have failed to complete the "wiring" test within the prescribed time.

The Results of the System: A period of three weeks is allowed from the date of despatch for the return of test answers, and in 1946 about 60 per cent. of all papers were returned in this time. The percentage varies in different courses, but tends to be highest where a higher educational standard is required for entry to the trade. In the first-year course in the electrical trades (in which many boys have an Industrial Junior Certificate), 84 per cent of papers were returned; in the first year of the motor mechanics course, where apprentices often have only reached Grade VI or Grade VII of the primary school, the percentage of returns was only 36.

Table XVIII indicates the success attained by apprentices who had studied by correspondence. In studying this Table it must be remembered that a number of apprentices who enrolled half way through the year 1947 took the preparatory course only, and would not sit for the annual trade examinations. Among those who sat for the 1947 annual examination in trade subjects were a number who also sat for examination in the University diploma courses of mechanical and electrical engineering.

TABLE XVIII
SUCCESS OF APPRENTICES IN COLLEGES AND
CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS, 1947

	Brisbane Colleges	Country Colleges	Correspon- dence School	Total
Enrolled at beginning of 1947	3,935	2,104	2,061	8,100
Sat for Annual Examinations	3,481	1,674	1,380	6,535
Percentage of Passes	71.4	70.6	63.4	—
Number of Bonus Passes ..	785	—	200	985
Percentage of Bonus Passes .	—	—	14.8	15.1

In a considered comparison, Mr. R. Leggat, chairman of the Queensland Apprenticeship Office, writes:

From the results obtained by apprentices at the 1946 and 1947 Trade Course Annual Examinations, I am convinced that students taking their technical courses by correspondence are doing remarkably well in comparison with apprentices who attend the Technical Colleges throughout Queensland, when it is considered that apprentices attending College are given at least a half day per fortnight day-time training, whereas the correspondence students study and complete their test papers in their own time, and in some cases are 1,200 miles away from the correspondence school. I am of the opinion that the correspondence course is a boon to those removed from College centres.

X

TEACHERS' AND UNIVERSITY COURSES

In most of the Australian States it is possible for teachers in the Education Department to study by correspondence for higher qualifications, and for under-graduates, who may never have attended a university, to be prepared and to sit for the same examinations as internal students. Usually the assistance offered to these students cannot be compared with that provided in the primary school; in some cases the notes supplied by the universities are brief and the tutorial assistance, where it exists, cannot be compared with the close supervision provided for young children. However, the entry of the technical correspondence schools into these fields may mark the introduction of more intensive coaching methods at the tertiary level.

Teachers' Courses

New South Wales: The Education Department does not provide correspondence courses for teachers studying for professional certificates.

Victoria: Before teachers are admitted to the training colleges they serve a period in a school as student teachers. During this period they are required to become proficient in such practical skills as Drawing and, for women, Needlework. These courses are available by correspondence.

There are also courses for the Infant Teachers' certificates (first and second class). These are used by experienced teachers seeking an additional qualification. The subjects for the certificates include the following:—

Psychology and Child Study; Education; Infant School Method, Educational Handwork; Literature and Art; English Literature; Nature Study; Drawing and Pastel-work; Hygiene; Speech Training.

The net enrolments in these courses at 30 June 1948 were:

Drawing	..	..	..	201
Needlework	..	..	..	163
Infant Teachers' Certificates	..	..	..	120

Queensland: The Queensland Education Department, through its Correspondence Tuition Department, which is associated with the Teachers' College, makes more extensive provision for assisting its officers to prepare for teachers' examinations, than does any other State. Approximately 100 teachers annually use the facili-

ties to complete the requirements for the Classification and Intermediate Examinations.

In recent years, there has been a decrease—as indicated below—in the number of teachers enrolled, probably due, in 1945, to the heavy enlistments in the armed forces and, in the years 1947 and 1948, to the special classes held for the benefit of returned teacher ex-servicemen. A decline is to be expected in the future because the Senior Examination has been made the qualifying examination for entrance to the Senior Teachers' College, and during the College course, which is now of two years' duration, student-teachers cover all examination requirements excepting the six University units for Class 1.

Many teachers, however, are still in the Service who have not yet passed the Departmental "Intermediate Examination" and who, therefore, still obtain assistance from the Correspondence Department.

ENROLMENTS

	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948
'Intermediate' Examination	142	78	121	77	70
'Classification' „	34	29	20	17	21
	<hr/> 176	<hr/> 107	<hr/> 141	<hr/> 94	<hr/> 91

South Australia: South Australia has adopted a single certificate for teachers, but it is probable that the old scheme of multiple certificates will endure for some time. The new standard educational qualification is a university Associateship in Arts and Education; the provision of correspondence courses for these subjects is discussed below.

Teachers who wish to study for the Leaving Examination for the IIIB Certificate may do so either through the correspondence school or the technical correspondence school; in the latter case fees are charged except for ex-servicemen studying under the reconstruction training scheme. The technical correspondence school offers all the Leaving courses previously available and has added several subjects to the range. While the content of the two courses is comparable, the latter course is designed for adult students and is marked by a greater maturity of expression.

Both schools also assist teachers, in metropolitan as well as country schools, studying for higher departmental certificates.

Western Australia: The technical correspondence school provides courses for ex-servicemen teachers studying for the teacher's "A" certificate. Tuition is given for the Education,

English Literature and Optional theses; the numbers at present enrolled are one hundred and thirty-four, fourteen and six respectively. All nine candidates who have been examined so far have passed. The standard for these theses is rated as equivalent to that of a pass in a third-year university subject; if a student has a degree with English and History as major subjects he is exempted from these subjects for the "A" certificate; but even students with a Diploma in Education are required to submit a thesis in Education.

In addition, correspondence tuition is provided for the Manual Training Certificates. Six students have gained their certificates and ten are at present enrolled.

Tasmania: All teachers are now trained by the University Department of Education, and the State Education Department does not provide correspondence courses for teachers.

University Courses

New South Wales: During the war years the University of Sydney enrolled members of the services as external students and appointed tutorial advisers. This service has not been continued. Teachers in northern districts may study as external students for Queensland degrees, and graduates may complete the Melbourne Bachelor of Education Degree externally. However, they are required to spend three weeks teaching in Melbourne schools so that their skill in practical teaching may be assessed. The University of Sydney has no provision for external students.

Victoria: The Faculties of Arts and Law will accept external students only if they are resident in Victoria. The Faculty of Education will accept students with the pre-requisite qualifications from any State. Formerly Commerce students were also granted external status, but this practice is being discontinued. External tuition is not available in other faculties.

The amount of assistance offered ranges from full notes and extensive reading guides (supplemented, in some cases, by well-stocked faculty libraries) to brief outlines. In some subjects (e.g., Mathematics and Philosophy) tutors assist external students. The scheme is handled by the departments concerned and the assistance available varies widely.

During the war years several thousand students were enrolled; in 1947 there were 636 external students, of whom many were teachers.

Queensland: The University of Queensland has the oldest Department of External Studies in Australia and it offers most assistance to students. Degree courses are available in Arts,

Commerce and Law, and Diploma courses in Journalism, Commerce and Education. The university does not provide a "correspondence course" as the term has been previously used. The aim is to place the external student as nearly as possible on the same footing as the more fortunate day student. The Department supplies students, with verbatim or authorized notes of the actual lectures delivered by the lecturer or professor concerned. The essays and exercises required of day students must be submitted by external students and are corrected by the lecturer who set them.

At present seventy-two subjects are available for external students. About twenty-five of these are available every second year only, thus Economics II alternates with Economics III, but, as these variations are regular, a student can plan his course accordingly. As all Queensland teachers must pass in six university subjects to secure the highest personal classification, these facilities are used by many teachers outside the capital.

The growth in numbers since the establishment of the department is illustrated in Table XIX.

TABLE XIX
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF EXTERNAL
STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number*</i>	<i>Percentage of Total</i>
1911	3	4
1916	43	20
1921	101	31
1926	178	37
1931	276	35
1936	403	35
1941	508	30
1945	932	43
1948	1152	27

*These figures are from the *University of Queensland Gazette*, July 1948.

For many years about one-third of all students have been studying externally; this proportion was increased during the later war years and fell in the post-war years as a result of the large increase of full-time students subsidized under the reconstruction training scheme.

One of the aims of the Department of External Studies is to bring members of the staff and students into as close relation as possible. Students are urged to write either to the Director, or through him to the university staff, concerning any matter on which they need advice or help. During the August vacation in 1946 the Department arranged an informal social gathering at which students could meet members of the staff.

The vacation school held in 1948 was attended by about one hundred students, mainly teachers. Thirty-two lectures in the principal subjects of the Arts course were delivered by members of the university teaching staff, who later met students. It is expected that this school will be extended by the inclusion of tutorial classes.

South Australia: Until 1948 no provision for external students was made by the University of Adelaide. However, for some years the Teachers' Union had secured notes of lectures and forwarded them to country students. With the creation of the Associateship in Arts and Education (A.U.A.) as the educational standard for the teachers' certificate the technical correspondence school received permission from the Council of the University of Adelaide to provide courses in the three compulsory subjects, namely, English I, Education and Psychology. The school sends out lecture notes and also prepares thorough assignments containing (a) summaries, (b) questions for the student to answer to his own satisfaction, (c) questions for which answers must be forwarded to the correspondence school. These questions are corrected and assessed, and a detailed report is sent to the student. About fifteen assignments cover the year's work; some of these contain more than fifty pages. It is expected that the range of subjects available will increase in 1949; the subjects prepared will depend on the demand for them. In 1948 approximately 100 students were enrolled.

Western Australia: Correspondence courses are provided for students in the faculties of Arts and Education who are unable to attend lectures. The subjects offered in 1948 were Economics I and IIB, Economic History, Economic Geography, Education I and II, English IB, II and III, French IB, II and III, History I, IIB, IIC, IID and III, Mathematics I, II and III, Applied Mathematics II, Philosophy I and IIB, and the subjects for the Diploma of Education for post-graduate students. External students are not usually allowed to enrol in more than two subjects. Matriculated students may obtain a degree solely through external study by passing the annual examinations; students may also borrow books from the university library. Turner¹ (p. 147) noted that in 1940, out of a total of 122 external students, 99 were teachers, a proportion which was said to be maintained from year to year. The number of external students enrolled in 1948 was 194.

Tasmania: There is no special provision made for external students in the University of Tasmania. They receive the same

¹ *The Training of Teachers in Australia*, M.U.P., 1943.

notes, synopses, etc., as do internal students, but beyond ensuring that they have some form of assistance in their studies — usually a private tutor who must be approved by the faculty — the university takes no further part in their tuition.

The total number of exempted students enrolled in 1948 was 101 (out of the total enrolment of 743). Of these, 81 were students in the Faculty of Arts; 33 were studying for other than degree purposes.

XI

EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS AND PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING CORRESPONDENCE WORK

The Handicap of Isolation

It would be quite incorrect to regard the correspondence work which has been described in the foregoing chapters as nothing but an administrative device which has proved successful in carrying educational facilities to children in isolated districts. It should have been obvious that the principles and practices involved are not without significance for education in general. It will be useful to deal with these directly.

It would be possible to make out a good case for the view that educational science owes much to methods worked out with children suffering from disabilities of various kinds. The scientific study of individual differences between children, the realization of the importance of adequate sensory stimuli, the careful analysis of the processes of learning involved in the fundamental school subjects, the importance and value of occupational work, the necessity for a clear distinction between the logically simple and the psychologically simple—these and similar concepts or movements owe more than is generally realized to pioneering work done with blind, deaf, or mentally handicapped children. In a similar way, it seems likely that contributions of general value to education can arise from the measures taken to meet the needs of children subjected to the social disability of isolation.

It will readily be admitted that the disability in question is a genuine one. Very important elements in a child's education come from his personal contact with his teachers and with his fellows. The opportunities which the school affords, or should afford, for the boy or girl to learn to co-operate with others, to assume responsibility among equals, to subordinate self to loyalty for the team or the school, to exercise the privilege of leadership, to enjoy the pleasures of companionship and the thrill of competition—these are some of the valuable social experiences normally denied to children who cannot attend school. Similarly, the city child has available to him advantages of an informational character through opportunities of first-hand observation of the commercial, political, scientific, and artistic aspects of modern community life.

Some Compensations

But the matter is not nearly as one-sided as it appears, even if we overlook the sad failure of many schools to realize effec-

tively their opportunities for character building and for making use of the wealth of the child's every-day experiences. Teaching children in classes has certain disadvantages, apart from the obvious difficulty of catering for the requirements and abilities of the children as individuals. It is not going too far to say that much of our class teaching places a discount on independent thinking and acting. The member of a class must usually be a conformist if he is to avoid troubles and difficulties. It is often sufficient if some one member of the class provides the correct "answer" to a question. For perhaps one-half of the class the process of thinking through to the correct solution is short-circuited. In the great majority of cases the question itself is a teacher-made one. The child who does not know is not at all anxious to announce, or even to admit, the fact, since, even if he is fortunate enough to have a teacher who inspires confidences of this nature, he does not wish to appear to disadvantage before his fellows.

The child whose education takes place as does that of correspondence pupils is not subjected to the constant temptation to adopt the ideas and solution of others. Intellectually, he must stand on his own feet. He learns to look to books and printed matter rather than to word of mouth for guidance in forming his ideas. One must suppose, then, that these habits counteract to some extent the disadvantages of isolation from a class group. It is interesting to note that correspondence pupils who have passed on to high schools have been reported to show initiative and perseverance. On the informational side, too, the correspondence pupil is not without his advantages. He may be without the multitudinous sights and sounds of city life, but he is surrounded by stimuli less artificial in character and more readily appropriated by the immature mind. Facts in nature study, geography, agriculture, and rural economics play an important part in his life, and the correspondence teacher is able to develop and systematize such interests.

Correspondence Work as Individual Instruction

The chief interest in correspondence work, when we consider it from the point of view of educational technique, lies in the fact that it is essentially a method of individual instruction. Looked at in this way, it must take its place with the Dalton Plan, the Winnetka Plan, and with other similar schemes for breaking down the rigidity of traditional class instruction. It differs, of course, from these plans, in that they adopt individual methods from preference, whereas correspondence work is individual from necessity. It differs also in that none of the schemes for individualizing instruction in schools goes to the length of com-

pletely abolishing class lessons. Class lessons are usually retained for subjects such as literature, where one of the chief aims is the inculcation of appreciation.

The chief reason for devising methods of individual instruction is not so much the pursuit of an educational philosophy as the essentially modern realization of the extent and importance of individual differences in learning. The well-attested success of such methods when properly devised and faithfully carried out arises from the fact that they are scientifically sound. If the fundamental school subjects are treated, in the main, by individual methods of instruction, there still remains in the school ample scope for the cultivation of the pupils' social qualities.

If it is allowed that the correspondence work described in the foregoing chapters is surprisingly effective, in view of the difficulties under which it labours, it may reasonably be claimed that this success is made possible because of the fact that the instruction is essentially individual in character. The time which the teacher would normally spend in teaching class lessons is devoted to going carefully over the work of one pupil after another. Each child's difficulties and requirements can be discerned and catered for, no time is wasted in explaining for slower children points which are already obvious to the brighter child. There is no danger of the class moving ahead and leaving the slower individuals behind, with some vital points unmastered.

If the foregoing is correct, there is scope for the much more extensive trial of individual methods of instruction in Australian schools. Probably the greatest advantage of such methods is found in the possibility which they provide of avoiding the tragedy of repetition of grades. If each child becomes the unit of instruction in the fundamental subjects, his rate of progress affects no one but himself; there is no need for the promotion *en bloc* at a given time of all except a few unfortunates; it is just as easy to cater for the child who needs fourteen or sixteen months to complete a grade's work as it is to cater for the child who can master it in ten, eight or even six months. The repetition of grades is less a failure on the part of the child than it is on the part of the school.

The Usefulness of Assignments

For the repetition of grades, individual instruction substitutes repetition of assignments, or portion of assignments. It is interesting to note that the assignment came to play an essential part in correspondence work, as it does in the Dalton Plan or the Winnetka Plan. A year's work in any subject must obviously be dealt with in sections or units. In ordinary class work these

units are topic units rather than time units. The teacher, for example, deals with one type of sum after another until the year's curriculum in arithmetic is covered. In individual instruction the term assignment or goal is used, because the unit is definitely presented to the child as a stage or problem which he is asked to master. Though the units need to be as clearly defined with reference to their subject-matter as are the teacher's class lessons, they are generally presented to the pupil in individual instruction in the form of time units. This is done to indicate the length of time which, on the average, it ought to take to deal with them, and on account of the general convenience of the method.

There is much to be said in favour of the assignment idea in general. It lends itself not only to a careful examination of the curriculum, but to thorough mastery of each stage by the pupil. The correspondence schools seem likely to make a contribution to the work of the ordinary schools in Australia in this direction, as well as others. In some of the States the lesson sheets of the correspondence school are widely used, even at present. On the whole, this interest is likely to have arisen from the instructional value of the sheets rather than from their usefulness as assignments or units.

There is almost certainly scope for the careful examination of Australian curricula from the point of view of the amount of ground they cover in a given time, the order in which topics are treated, and the stage at which given topics are introduced. Although in Australia, as in other countries, there has been a steady growth away from the arm-chair type of curriculum fashioned in the administrative office, the possibilities of a curriculum based on careful research in schools are far from being fully realized. It is reasonable to suppose that such developments are capable of receiving much assistance from the experience of the correspondence schools. The use of assignments in ordinary schools, backed up by careful testing, would be of even more general value for this purpose, since caution would have to be used in arguing from work carried out under the special conditions which hold for correspondence work.

The assignment, especially if accompanied by some device for enabling the pupil to gauge his own progress, is specially useful in appealing to the motive of progressive mastery. By far the greater part of any curriculum has much interest in its own right if skilfully presented. Here the assignments can take on the attractiveness of projects. In subjects like history and geography there is no need to tabulate and standardize in detail the facts which children should gain from their studies. Twenty or thirty years ago the subjects in question consisted of little

more than a tabulation of facts which children were expected to memorize. The dry bones must be clothed with flesh and blood, but we must see that there is sufficient stiffening of bones to avoid flabbiness and inefficiency. Well-drawn-up assignments can cater for both necessities.

The Value of Personal Knowledge of Pupils

Undoubtedly some of the achievements of the correspondence schools are directly due to the fine personal relationships set up between teacher and pupil. The teacher is just as much interested in the new pony, of which Tom is immensely proud, or of the plans for the next holidays, as she is in the fact that nine-tenths of the last arithmetic assignment was correctly done. In ordinary classes it is more or less inevitable that teacher and pupil should occasionally rub each other up the wrong way. Such antipathies are of more than minor importance in a child's education. They would be less common if the teacher knew more of the out-of-school life of the child, of his personal difficulties with his playfellows, of his leisure interests and hobbies, of any unfavourable circumstances or poor training in the home. The time spent in gaining such knowledge would be time well spent.

The Development of Initiative

Finally, the work of the correspondence schools suggests the possibility that the ordinary school might do more to encourage the growth of the qualities of self-reliance and initiative on the part of the pupils. For the pupil in an ordinary class, help is always at hand, either surreptitiously or officially. The wise teacher will devise many ways in which the individual child will be encouraged to act and think on his own initiative; he will seek to avoid exercising any tyranny, even of the pleasantest kind, over the thinking of the immature minds in his charge; he will see that as often as possible each child is thrown on his own resources; he will welcome and encourage any sign of originality. It will probably be agreed that we need to give much more attention to these matters than we have done in the past.

The foregoing considerations have arisen from the attempt to draw some conclusions of general value from the work of the correspondence schools. It would be out of place for one not actually engaged in the work to go far in attempting to make suggestions for the correspondence schools themselves when they are doing their work so enthusiastically and so successfully. Those who are responsible for the work done in these schools would be the first to admit that finality had not yet been reached.

General Summary

It may, however, be helpful to state in the form of a summary the general principles and practices which the correspondence schools have found to work successfully, and to add to these any further suggestions which occur, particularly those which arise from special provisions which have been dealt with in the body of the report.

1. The key to success in correspondence work for primary school children is co-operation between parents and teachers. If the parents can be made to feel that the teachers are personally interested in the welfare of their pupils, then, in the great majority of cases, they make friends of the teachers and co-operate heartily with them. The personal letters between teacher, pupils and parents are powerful stimuli in securing co-operation.

2. A parent or some member of the family must be able to read or write, in order to help pupils of the junior classes, but a high degree of education on the part of the home supervisor is not necessary.

3. It is advisable for the pupils to work to a time-table that meets the convenience of the parent or home supervisor. The advantage of working to a time-table is that children learn the habit of working regularly and systematically.

4. It pays to insist on quality rather than amount of work from the very beginning. If this is done, the ideal of neatness and orderliness can be satisfactorily attained by at least 90 per cent. of the pupils.

5. Achievement is a powerful stimulus. Care should be taken that each pupil achieves some success in each assignment.

6. The assignment method, in which the curriculum is presented to the pupil in the form of unitary but related tasks, each of which is carefully corrected, is the most effective method of carrying out correspondence work. Much care and attention are needed to see that the assignments are within the scope of the pupil, that they are made as attractive as possible, and that they represent suitable subdivisions of the curriculum.

7. Educational diagnosis is a very important feature of the work. In the first place, it is necessary to ascertain the general educational level of a pupil who is being enrolled for the first time. It is desirable that separate assessment should be made in each of the fundamental subjects. For this purpose, standardized educational tests would be of great assistance. If the size of the correspondence school permits, it is an advantage for one or more special teachers to be trained and to undertake the work of determining the classification of new pupils.

In the second place, careful diagnosis of the cause of children's errors is essential; merely to point out errors is not

sufficient. By a little careful study of each child's work, it is usually possible for the correspondence teachers to remedy mistakes by getting to their source.

8. Full advantage should be taken of the possibilities which correspondence instruction affords in the way of flexibility of grading and promotion. In a carefully worked out system of individual instruction it is possible to make a child's rate of progress in any subject independent of any considerations except his ability for that subject and his industry. This is specially advantageous both for the child whose ability is greater than average and for the child who cannot learn at the normal rate. It eliminates the worse features of the problem of retardation, and it solves the problem of the child who commences work during the school year instead of at the beginning of it.

9. Though under such a system as the foregoing it will be found that a certain number of children will be working at different standards in different subjects, it may be convenient, if not necessary, to select some one subject as the major subject in determining the child's classification. There is little doubt that for this purpose the subject of English should be chosen on account of its key position in regard to the child's learning in general. It may further be suggested that the subdivisions of the subject of English which should carry most weight are those of composition, considered chiefly from the standpoint of fertility and originality of idea, reading vocabulary, and reading comprehension; and the subdivisions of spelling, oral reading and memorization of prose or poetry should carry relatively little weight.

10. One of the most important functions of the correspondence school is the encouragement of reading on a wide and wise scale. For the majority of correspondence pupils this will be a much more valuable type of training than the achievement of advanced standards in more formal work. A good library of selected books is an almost indispensable adjunct to a correspondence school. The reading circle, the regular reviewing of books, the publication of notes about authors, and other devices, have been successfully employed to encourage and guide the reading of pupils.

11. Much can be done to remedy the disadvantages arising from the isolation of correspondence pupils. By means of their own school newspaper or magazine, they can be brought into touch with the wide world in which they live, the significance of national days and events can be brought home to them, current history can be made meaningful in an appropriate way, they can be led to grasp in an elementary form the economic structure of society and the part played in it by themselves and

their parents. More ambitious plans of educational tours, itinerant teachers, and camps have been tried with great advantage to those pupils who have been able to participate in them.

12. Not the least important part of the correspondence school's work is that of cultivating an intelligent interest by the child in his own environment. This cannot well be done by regular standardized assignments, since the surroundings and opportunities of pupils differ so materially. It has been found possible to introduce successfully the subjects of nature study, drawing, sewing, and other forms of occupational work.

13. The development of post-primary correspondence courses of a cultural and practical character seems to be a step in the right direction. If a student proposes to take up professional work, it would not seem desirable for him to go past the primary stage without attending a school.

Contact with his fellows and the stimulus of competition in work and games is highly desirable, particularly for any one seeking university qualifications. However, as the work of the secondary and the technical correspondence schools shows, instruction of a high standard is available in examination subjects and in a wide range of cultural and vocational subjects.

14. A question likely to arise in some States is that of the closer co-ordination between centres which are carrying out correspondence work at different stages. This problem has been accentuated by the establishment of technical correspondence schools which *inter alia* are preparing students for the secondary external examinations. Whichever method is better, there can be no doubt of the desirability of co-operation between the various stages and facilities.

15. The outstanding development in correspondence tuition in the past decade has been the phenomenal growth of the technical correspondence schools providing academic, commercial and agricultural courses as well as technical courses. The use of the facilities by older students suggests that correspondence courses may prove a powerful agent in adult education.

16. Enrolments in the primary and secondary correspondence schools have probably reached their peak; with the consolidation of schools and the expansion of school transport services they may decline slightly. The enrolment of adult students in technical correspondence schools will almost certainly decline; but when stability in numbers is reached it will probably be considerably above the pre-war level.

XII

THE NEW ZEALAND CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL

Introduction

The Correspondence School is organized to provide educational facilities for persons — whether children or adults — who are unable to attend ordinary classes owing to distance from school, personal disabilities, or the nature of their employment.

History

Primary: The Correspondence School was opened on 1 February 1922, in a room in the Government Buildings, as the result of representations from harassed backblockers, County Councils and Education Boards throughout the country during the preceding years.

On 17 October 1921 the Minister of Education was notified that applications had already been received on behalf of 83 children, and shortly afterwards applications were called "for a teacher, preferably a lady, to give tuition by correspondence to primary school pupils."

On 12 January 1922, when the roll was over 100, the first teacher was appointed. By the end of the year the roll was well over 200 and a second teacher was added to the staff. The first headmaster was appointed in August, 1923, to control a staff of four teachers and a cadet. All lessons were written by hand, a "standard" of work was established and administrative procedures developed.

The number of pupils steadily increased until in 1925, owing to the dearth of teachers, the roll had to be limited to 500; only the most urgent cases were enrolled. This limit continued until 1927. Then the primary roll increased steadily until 1937, since when it has remained comparatively stable at a figure between 1,800 and 1,900.

The curriculum now contains all the subjects taught in the outside schools.

Post-Primary: In February 1928, the Education Department received a request on behalf of 30 parents for continuation classes for their children, who had passed through the primary department of the correspondence school.

In March 1929, the secondary division was opened with an enrolment of 50 pupils and two teachers. Later in the year a third teacher was appointed. By 1930 the secondary roll had risen to 300, and four additional teachers had joined the staff. During the same year a clerical division was established.

Enrolments continued to increase steadily until the division contained 1,300 pupils in 1941. From 1942 onwards there has been a rapid increase, due mainly to the enrolment of part-time students for such courses as Postal Students' Entrance, Public Service Temporaries (for transfer to permanent staff), and Public Service Promotion Examination. The present roll contains over 3,000 names; the staff numbers 90 teachers.

From small beginnings the curriculum has been extended until it now includes almost all of the subjects taught in post-primary schools.

The Size of Correspondence Education

The number of students receiving instruction and the numbers of the teaching and clerical staff have been shown in the relevant Tables of Chapter III. The proportions of correspondence pupils in Australia and New Zealand are very similar, but whereas more than sixty per cent. of the New Zealand students are in the post-primary division, less than fifteen per cent. are in the Australian secondary classes. However, many post-primary students in New Zealand would be included on the technical rolls in Australia.

Administrative Aspects

How the School is Organized: As the school is housed in buildings which have been adapted for the purpose, it has not been possible to provide the type of accommodation most desired. It has, however, been possible to arrange the various sections of the school so that they revolve, so to speak, around a central organization which is generally called the office, or, more correctly, the administrative division.

For administrative purposes the school is divided into four main divisions: the primary teaching division; the secondary teaching division; the arts and crafts division; and the office or administrative division. Each is under its own section head, who is directly responsible to the headmaster. These divisions are in turn sub-divided into sections: for instance, the family class and primer sections of the primary division; the commercial and academic sections of the secondary division; the needlework and woodwork sections, and so on.

The office is also sub-divided in this way, being composed of separate yet interlocking sections which deal with the various aspects of the clerical work of the school.

The clerical sections are situated on the ground floor where they are immediately available for the delivery of mails and supplies, and for the convenience of callers. A loading dock and sorting room are provided at the goods entrance, where each

morning and afternoon the special mail vans from the Wellington Chief Post Office deliver their loads of bulging mail bags and collect the waiting outward pile.

Incoming mail is sorted immediately on receipt; the familiar two-way envelopes are sorted into classes or subjects, date-stamped and distributed to the teaching staff; letters are handed into the office to be opened, filed and referred to the appropriate person for reply.

The Documents in the Case: The basis of all organization in the office itself is the pupil's personal file, that is, a file made up of all the papers, reports, etc., relating to any one family, starting, of course, with the original application form. These files have stiff cardboard backs and strong paper covers and are kept in strict alphabetical order.

Supplementing these files are the official school registers, in which the names of all pupils are entered and in which a record of their progress is kept, and a number of card indices. With a roll of several thousand pupils a satisfactory system of recording the changes which occur daily is essential, and it is the duty of four special clerks to record daily the enrolment, promotion and withdrawal of pupils from the roll.

Each Friday a check is made of the changes made during the week and a return showing the state of the roll in every class in the school is submitted to the Headmaster. The importance of this will be realized when it is mentioned that the strength of the teaching staff is directly based on roll numbers, the staffing in each section being determined according to a fixed scale.

The Sinews of Learning: Another large section of the main office deals with the supply of textbooks and stationery to pupils on the mail order system. As all pupils use books and stationery from the school store, a special ledger account has to be kept for each family; in this are recorded particulars of the receipt of cash remittances and the value of goods actually posted out. These, together with the actual work of purchasing and issuing supplies to individual pupils, employ upwards of six clerks; the actual goods handled, besides coming from local firms in New Zealand, are also purchased in bulk from England and sometimes America.

The preparation of the school lesson material is carried out by the typing and duplicating sections from drafts prepared in longhand by the teaching staff. All lesson material is first typed on wax stencils and then printed on absorbent paper by means of electrically-driven duplicating machines. After printing, the individual sheets are collected and stapled in sets or assignments with an electrically-operated stitching machine. The finished

assignments are then filed in labelled pigeon-holes until required.

A further activity is the issue of library books to the pupils, and for this purpose the school is equipped with a fine library of some 18,000 volumes. Care is taken to ensure that all books issued are correctly recorded, and for this purpose the card index system is again resorted to.

New books are purchased locally, and also in bulk directly from the English publishers; the numbering, recording and cataloguing of each batch of new books is itself a considerable task.

The Two-way Envelope: Here it may be appropriate to mention that some years ago the clerical work of the school was being hampered by the necessity of addressing and stamping thousands of envelopes each day, and it became urgent to devise some alternative scheme.

The result was the introduction of the manilla two-way envelopes with which most old correspondence school pupils are familiar. This system does away with much of the work of addressing, and in addition requires no postage stamps. This does not, of course, mean that no postage is paid, but that it is paid in bulk monthly, with a great saving in office work.

The two-way envelope itself was the personal invention of the present headmaster, and the flat rate postage system was introduced after considerable negotiations with the Post Office, and after tests of the average weights had been made over a period to enable the postal authorities to fix a suitable flat charge per packet.

No account of the clerical side of the work of the school would be complete without a reference to the school store, in which stocks of everything used in its activities are kept. The store is centrally situated on the ground floor and issues are made in accordance with the issue dockets made out in the main office on receipt of the individual orders.

All goods in the store are "on charge" as Government stores and have to be carefully accounted for. A stocktaking is carried out twice each year and the stocks of all articles are carefully counted and compared with the balances showing in the store's ledgers, kept in the main office.

Getting a Start: Let me try to describe some of the activities of the secondary division of the correspondence school. Perhaps the best way is to tell you what happens from the moment a letter of enquiry is received by the headmaster asking for a course at the school. In reply, information about costs and courses is sent from the office, together with enrolment form suitable for both full-time and part-time students. One page of this four-page form gives information which will help the applicant to

complete it, free-place regulations, courses and the careers for which they are designed, and advice concerning methods of study by correspondence. When the form is completed by the pupil and parent, one part goes to the Senior Inspector of the local Education Board for his recommendation. The Senior Inspector forwards this to the Education Department. The other part is returned direct to the school, along with any money which may be required for hire of text-books and purchase of stationery.

According to the type of course required, the parts of the enrolment form, now reunited on the applicant's file, are sent to one of the groups of the secondary division for the subjects to be chosen by the head teacher of that group. There are four main groups for full-course pupils: Academic, Commercial, Country Life and Home Life. In addition, there are sections catering for students in employment: Postal Students, Public Service Temporaries, Maori School Assistants, C-Certificate candidates.

On the enrolment form of the intending student are noted the subjects to be studied and his classification. The skeleton file now goes to a teacher who sends sets, time-tables and general instructions in three two-way envelopes, and from there to a clerical officer who makes out an order on the school store for the issue of hired books and stationery. While this order is being attended to, the file goes through to the typists' room, where it is respectably dressed in a new cover, various items are typed on it, and a number of cards for record purposes (roll cards, library cards, etc.) are prepared. The completed file now makes another trip upstairs where it is circulated among the new pupil's subject teachers, one of whom will act as form-teacher. Finally the file is returned to the office, where it gets a rest (temporary only) in its alphabetical pigeon-hole.

As time goes on, this file grows by the addition of letters, reports, promotion forms, receipts and so on, till, in the case of some families, we have fine fat files three or four inches in depth. What mines of information these files are, too, as the teachers are pleased to discover when they are asked to write testimonials for pupils who were on the roll five or even ten years ago.

We will now follow the three two-way envelopes which were sent to the student with the first three sets of the chosen subjects. These ingenious envelopes measure 11 by 9 inches and have two triangular flaps. These may be simply fastened on either side, leaving uncovered on the opposite side the address of the pupil or that of the school, whichever is desired.

When the pupil has completed his first set of work, consisting

of answers to questions in the assignment in the various subjects of his course, the "scripts" are placed in one of these envelopes and mailed to the school. No stamps are used, as postage is paid by the school, as explained above.

Set 2 is now treated in the same way, and then Set 3. In the meantime, the corrected written work of Set 1, accompanied by model answers, and also by the assignments of Set 4, will have returned from the school. Thus, the pupil is assured of an unbroken supply of assignments, even when the mails are slow and deliveries are made only once or twice a week.

Conditions of Entry: So far we have described only the "machinery" of correspondence tuition. But the machinery exists for the benefit of the pupils, and we will now see how the school has developed and organized its facilities to cater for different types.

In New Zealand, full-time attendance at an approved school is compulsory until the age of 15 years. This, in effect, means that nearly every child spends at least a year at a post-primary school, resulting in another group being added to those for whom correspondence education was designed.

To qualify for enrolment in the secondary division of the school a pupil must be debarred by health or by distance, or, in the case of those in employment, by conflicting working hours, from attending an ordinary post-primary school. In some cases, too, the local district high school or technical evening school does not supply tuition in one or more of the desired subjects. In such cases application for assistance may be made to the correspondence school.

Curricula and Methods

Subjects Taught and Omitted: In the primary school, all subjects of the curriculum are taught; the chief difficulty is encountered in such subjects as nature study.

In the post-primary school, the subjects taught include:

Languages:	English, Latin, French, Maori. No Greek or German.
Social Studies:	History, Geography, Social Studies.
Mathematics and Science:	General Mathematics, Arithmetic, Geometry, Algebra, Trigonometry, General Science, Biology, Botany, Chemistry, Electricity and Magnetism, Homecraft, Human Biology. No Heat, Light and Sound, or Zoology.
Commercial:	Commercial Practice, Book-keeping, Shorthand, Typewriting, Mercantile Law.
Agricultural:	General Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Dairying, Horticulture, Farm Book-keeping, Agricultural Botany, Plant Protection, Horticultural Botany, Fertilisers, Bee-keeping, Poultry Farming.

Arts and Crafts:	Drawing Design, Pictorial Design, Lettering, Water Colour-Painting, Commercial Art, Book-Craft, Woodwork, Wooden-Toy Making, Soft-Toy Making, Soft Leather Work, Cane Basketry, Felt Work, Raffia Work, Clothing, Dress Designing, Embroidery.
Teachers' Certificate:	Education, English Language, English Literature, Principles and Practice of Teaching, School and Personal Hygiene, Needlework, Drawing (Free-hand and Blackboard), Geography, History, Agriculture and Dairy Science, Chemistry, Domestic Science, Botany, Biology, Latin, French, Pure Mathematics

The latest methods of teaching are embodied in the assignments which are fully illustrated and are constantly being revised and re-written.

The school is allotted two half-hour broadcast sessions each school week over all the main N.Z. radio stations. Topics dealt with include story-telling, number work, rhythm for infants, travel talks, social studies, dramatization of stories, French pronunciation, shorthand dictation, and talks by the headmaster and teachers on items of topical interest.

Primary Division

The primary department embraces four sections: the Infant classes, the Standard classes, the Family class and the Special section. A study of these four sections, whilst showing the function of each, will also give a pattern of the whole work of the primary department.

The Infant Classes: Almost every visitor to the Correspondence school asks the same question, "How can YOU teach the young child entering school to read and write?" The answer to this question, lies in the work in the infant classes or, as they are usually called, the primer classes. There are more than 650 children in the primer classes, the majority of whom begin their school career with the correspondence school at the age of five years (although attendance at any school is not compulsory until the age of seven years.) Reading, printing and number work are taught by the latest methods introduced into the schools. These are very formal, but the wonderful keenness of the children and the wise guidance of the supervisor, usually the mother, are responsible for amazing progress. All the assignments of work are prepared and illustrated by the teachers, and where any difficulties are encountered by supervisors they are encouraged to write for further guidance to individual teachers. In the primer classes there is an extensive library of suitable supplementary readers as well as a good selection of large picture

books. These are sent regularly to all pupils. A feature of the work in the primers is the free art work, the children being supplied from the school with large sheets of paper and crayons. They are often asked to express freely stories and scenes round the home. In such work guidance from the supervisor, it is insisted, should be, if any is given at all, at the very minimum. Some of the scenes sent in include horses and cows with three or five legs and people without mouths and ears; but those details are of little importance as long as the drawings are the children's own attempts. For subjects that cannot be taught by correspondence, the radio is brought into play. Weekly radio lessons for primers are given in such subjects of the curriculum as rhythmic movement, singing games and simple dramatized stories.

The Standard Classes: In the standard classes (Standard I to Form II), there are over 700 pupils. Their ages range between 7 and 15 years. An adult class is attached to Form II. This adult class is for men and women who for various reasons did not complete their primary school education. Now having need, in most cases, of a primary school attainment in order to take up certain positions, these men and women return to school by correspondence and often work hard, usually at night and in the week-ends, to improve their educational standard.

The work in the standard classes is based on the revised curriculum and compares favourably with what is done in other schools. Whilst the teaching is primarily on what may be called the "tool" subjects, Reading, English Composition and Grammar, Writing and Arithmetic, other subjects of the curriculum receive full emphasis. For instance, this year assignments are being written in Social Studies (History and Geography) based on the new syllabus. Standard class teachers not only write all the assignments but also illustrate them. The keynote of all the work is to arouse and maintain the interest of the pupil. This is the basis of all teaching by correspondence. As the pupil progresses from standard to standard the amount of supervision by a parent or supervisor diminishes accordingly until it is, in general, recognized that little or no supervision is needed when a pupil enters Form I. Habits of independence and self-reliance are carefully fostered.

Sewing for girls is a compulsory subject from Standard I upwards, and much handwork is embodied in the assignments of work. Art, as in the infant section, is a feature of the standard classes, the media used being pencil, ink, crayon and water colour. Nature-study is taught in Standards I-IV, whilst provision is made for boys in Forms I and II and also boys over eleven years, to take courses in wooden toy-making and light woodwork. Standard class teachers take part in the

school's radio broadcasts, and a wide variety of subjects and interests is covered. On completing a Form II course, pupils receive the Primary School Certificate which enables them to proceed to a post-primary school or to the secondary department of the correspondence school.

Primary assignments are not sent to pupils attending schools, except in cases of emergency, such as the 1948 poliomyelitis epidemic, when pupils of all schools in New Zealand — public and private, primary and post-primary — received the school's printed assignments which they worked at home.

The Family Class Section: If three or more children from one family or household are pupils of the primary department they are placed under one teacher in the Family Class section. The teacher in this section has work similar to that of the teacher of the household school or the sole-charge school, whilst the supervisor, usually the mother, thus maintains contact with only one teacher. The assignments used by pupils in the Family Class section are exactly the same as those used in the primer and standard classes, and the Family Class teachers help to prepare them. There are some three hundred pupils in the Family Class, but of this number over fifty come from islands outside New Zealand. All primary school pupils from the islands or elsewhere on the roll are placed in this section, and it is interesting to record some of the different places to which the two-way envelopes travel. There are girls and boys who live in the Chatham, Cook, Fiji and Solomon Islands as well as many other islands, and assignments of work have been asked for on behalf of their children by New Zealand parents whose occupations have taken them to the countries of the Middle East and the Far East.

The Special Section: A two-fold function is served by the Special Section of the primary department. The first is that of removing obstacles to the progress of pupils in the other sections who for various reasons have become retarded in their work. Such reasons as irregular school work, intermittent or persistent sickness, serious weaknesses in the basic subjects, particularly reading, are cases in point. Remedial work is carried out by the Special Section after a thorough analysis of the reasons for the pupil's progress being retarded. The second function of the Special Section is to provide suitable assignments of work for the physically handicapped children and the sick children in hospital and at home. This entails the modified use of the ordinary assignments of the primer and standard classes and the preparation of individual assignments suited to the particular child. Linked with the sending out of special work for the pupils

of the Special Section there is a scheme of visiting pupils in hospitals and in their own homes in the main centres by teachers usually from the Special Section staff. Numbered among the pupils of the Special Section have been brides of New Zealand servicemen, and young women from Greece, Italy and Jugo-Slavia, who wished to learn to read and write English.

The Children's Supervisors: A brief chapter such as this on the work of the primary department would fall short if a sincere tribute were not paid to the work of the children's supervisors. In nine cases out of ten the supervisor is the mother, for during school hours the husband and the adult members of the household are usually employed in their work outside the home. Despite the hundred-and-one duties performed by the mother of the family, in very few cases indeed is the education of the children retarded through lack of the necessary supervision. In no other school is there such close co-operation and mutual help between parents or supervisors and teachers as there is in our school. On such co-operation and mutual help the work of the primary department has been built and expanded.

Post-Primary Division

"Will you please stop sending me assignments as I wish to give up the course I am taking with you? This is the third time I have asked, but new assignments keep on coming back with model answers and I cannot stop." This S.O.S. accompanied a full set of work from a Form IV pupil who apparently felt that he was being swept along in a great flood of learning from which he was powerless to escape.

Voluntary Students: The incident emphasizes two features which are important in the work of the secondary division of the correspondence school. The first is the voluntary nature of most of the work undertaken by students, and the second is the great part that habit and routine must play in the pupil's work. Educating oneself is a serious business at this stage.

The voluntary aspect is worth thinking about. Of the three thousand secondary pupils of the school, over two-thirds are part-time students. That is, they are in employment during the day and study at night time, either to improve their academic status by gaining certificates and passing examinations or to benefit themselves technically or culturally. Of the thousand full-time students, less than half are under fifteen years of age and therefore by law compelled to attend school.

This gives us an interesting picture of, well over two thousand pupils, spread over the whole of New Zealand, who

are reading and memorizing, making notes and writing answers to questions entirely under their own steam. I admit they are supplied with plenty of paper to light their metaphorical fires, but the fact does remain that they start and stop their lessons, revise and correct, allocate their time to this or that subject without the aid of bell or blackboard. No wonder the pupil educated by correspondence develops a more than usual degree of self-reliance and initiative.

The assignment service of the school is on a fortnightly basis — each set contains approximately the same amount of work; and the wise (and happy) student takes full advantage of this fact by working strictly to a time table which enables him or her to return written work to the school for correction at regular intervals. The haphazard pupil wears out his powers of determination by having continually to make decisions between working to-night and going to the pictures, to a dance, or even to bed.

Every Pupil to his Choice: Pupils who wish to continue their secondary education for only one or two years would probably choose a Country Life course if boys, or a Home Life course if girls. These courses consist of the compulsory secondary subjects which must be studied by all pupils under the age of 15 years: English, Social Studies, General Mathematics, General Science, Music Appreciation, Health Education and a handcraft. Country Life pupils in addition study General Agriculture, while girls in Home Life take Drawing, Clothing and perhaps some other craft-work. Pupils in these sections may sit for the School Certificate examination and may also qualify for the Endorsed School Certificate.

If the Commercial course is taken, the compulsory subjects in Form III are supplemented by a special subject, Commercial Practice; Book-keeping is studied later in the course, and instruction in Shorthand and Typewriting is also given.

Those who intend to sit for the School Certificate, and then the University Entrance, enrol in the academic section. A foreign language or mathematics is studied (perhaps both), and sometimes a science subject, such as Chemistry, Electricity and Magnetism, or Biology, is added later in the course.

The School Certificate, representing the result of three or four years' post-primary study in four examination subjects chosen from a wide range, together with a comprehensive three-years' course in a group of compulsory subjects may be gained in any of the four secondary groups. The University Entrance examination, however, is taken only by pupils in the academic

section. University Scholarship and C-certificate candidates also belong to this section.

As a supplement to the formal work contained in the assignments, radio broadcasts are given twice a week on such topics as musical appreciation, travel talks, dramatic work in English, shorthand dictation and French pronunciation.

Mention has already been made of part-time as distinct from full-time students. Part-time pupils may take a full course for examination purposes, or they may take approved courses consisting of two or more subjects. Generally speaking, single subjects, or "hobby" studies, are available on a fee-paying basis, but the cost of five shillings per term per subject is so small that it does not deter people who wish to develop an art or craft or to repair some weakness in their educational equipment.

Free education is available to everyone till the end of the school year in which he reaches the age of 19 years. If the total period of post-primary education under this regulation is less than five years, free education is available at any age until the five years' period is completed.

Technical Correspondence Courses: The school caters for all women's courses of a technical nature. These include all branches of Needlework and Embroidery; handwork courses include Soft-toy Making, Soft Leather Work, Felt Work, Raffia Work, Cane Basketry, Soft Metal Work, Bookcraft, Drawing, Design and Lettering, Ticket and Showcard Writing. Homecraft courses include Laundry, Cookery, First Aid and Home Nursing, and Home Furnishing.

On the commercial side the school provides courses in Commercial Practice, Mercantile Law, Book-keeping and Accounts, Shorthand, Typewriting.

On the agricultural side courses are provided dealing with the practical side of all types of farming. Such courses include Animal Husbandry, Dairying, Horticulture, Farm and Orchard Crops, Pasture and Pasture Plants, Soil Science, Farm Pests and Diseases, Agricultural Botany, Horticultural Botany, Sheep-farming, Poultry-keeping and Bee-keeping.

There are full courses in woodwork from light Woodcraft, Toy-making, etc., for primary pupils, to advanced woodwork embodying elementary Cabinet Making. In addition, there are courses in Technical Drawing, Instrumental Drawing, and Building Construction.

Another branch of the department provides technical correspondence courses in engineering subjects—civil, electrical, diesel, workshop practice, etc. Courses are also provided for the training of apprentices in other trades.

Some Special Aspects of Correspondence Education

Social Education: This sketch of the correspondence school would not be complete without some short reference to the opportunities available to pupils for less formal, but very important, social and cultural education. The work of the library has already been mentioned, but, in addition, pupils may, if they wish, join a large number of clubs and societies which have been developed to cater for the interests of pupils of all ages. Among these are the Lone Scouts and Cubs, Lone Guides, Naturalists' Club, Animal Welfare Club, Junior Red Cross, Pen-friendship Club, Stamp Club, Meccano and Model Building Club. For older pupils there are the International Affairs Club, the Story Writers' Club, the Play Readers' Club, the Esperanto Club, and the Young Farmers' Club.

A school magazine, *The Postman*, is published annually and distributed free to all pupils. A large part of the magazine consists of original contributions by the pupils themselves. Once a term a printed Circular, containing school notices and items of interest, is sent to all pupils.

Strong and enthusiastic associations of parents and ex-pupils co-operate with and assist the school in many ways. Each is given an annual grant of £100 by the government to defray the travelling expenses of executive members.

Teacher-Pupil Relationship: The relationship between the teacher and the pupil is of the friendliest possible nature. Every endeavour is made to secure and maintain this relationship, for when it exists the keenness and effort of the pupil are matched only by the interest and care of the teacher. The interchange of the friendly personal letter in one assignment after another develops this outstanding relationship which is a bulwark of teaching by correspondence in the primary department. To the teachers the friendliness and naturalness of the correspondence school children in their letters are invigorating. The staff can, too, often judge the personalities of their pupils by these letters which periodically are accompanied by photographs.

Six teachers are employed full-time in visiting pupils in their homes. Their mission is to bring the school to the pupil, to discuss difficulties with parents, and to solve problems which cannot be so well dealt with by letter.

The Attainments and Progress of Pupils

The pupils of the Correspondence School make progress which compares favourably with that of pupils in other schools. The progress depends largely on the pupil's own ability and determination and on the home environment. The majority of corre-

spondence school pupils develop initiative, self-discipline, and a spirit of independence which is most valuable in after life.

In 1947 a survey was taken of ex-correspondence school pupils then attending regular post-primary schools. The numbers ranged from ten in a school of 450 pupils to 31 in a school of 880 pupils. In all, there were 387 pupils in 24 schools and training colleges. Typical comments were. "Work of pupils trained by correspondence is most thorough," "Have fitted in very well," "A normal cross-section of post-primary pupils." "Usually come in upper half of form."

In outside examinations in 1947 correspondence school post-primary pupils secured 569 passes. This included 140 passes in the teachers' "C" certificate examination, 65 passes in the School Certificate examination, 155 passes in the Postal Students' Entrance examination.

The work of the Correspondence School is recognized by all the educational authorities in New Zealand as being on a par with that of other schools. The University of New Zealand accredits our pupils for University Entrance without examination, and the Education Department accepts the headmaster's recommendations for the granting, without examination, of Endorsed School Certificates and Higher School Certificates.

Future Developments

The most important development in view is the establishment of a school hostel. The plan is to bring to the hostel in succession for a fortnight or three weeks groups of pupils of the same educational standard. At the school the pupils will carry out a programme of such community activities as they miss in their own isolated homes. Emphasis will also be placed on handwork, cookery, needlework, etc., for girls, and woodwork, metal-work, agriculture, etc., for boys.

It is also planned to establish a fully-equipped laboratory at the hostel, so that post-primary pupils studying science subjects will be able to carry out a course of practical work at the school. At present pupils do the simpler practical work in their own homes with kits of equipment sent out from the school, but for the more advanced work they have to depend on the generosity of the headmasters of post-primary schools in allowing them to work in the school laboratories for a fortnight each year.

Once this laboratory is established it will be possible to extend the number of science subjects in the curriculum; for instance, courses will be written in Heat, Light and Sound, Physics and Zoology.

Conclusion

This short sketch has aimed to give at least a suggestion of the complexity and scope as well as the efficiency of the educational service which the Correspondence School provides. Space does not allow a description of the amazingly complete social service given by the various clubs and societies to the full-time pupils, or the close and helpful relationship established between each pupil and his form teacher. Nor need one quote statistics to prove that the pupils of the Correspondence School receive an education which compares most favourably with that enjoyed by technical and high school students.

In conclusion, a word must be said about what the school does for temporary and permanent invalids, and for others who, through ill-health or accident, are unable to attend high school or college. As pupils of the Correspondence School they can go ahead with their studies without any serious breaks. On recovery, they can then go back to day school to find themselves still on the same level as their old classmates. If this were the only job the school did, it would still justify its position as one of the leading educational institutions in New Zealand.

APPENDIX A

THE OPINIONS OF PUPILS AND HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

During 1948 a short questionnaire was sent to post-primary schools in New South Wales and South Australia which were expected to have among their pupils some who had received their earlier education by correspondence. The aim of the enquiry was to check the conclusions reached in an earlier investigation carried out in the Uralla and Armidale districts of New South Wales. This earlier investigation studied children from twenty-four families who had attended the correspondence school, and also the results of ex-correspondence pupils in the Uralla and Armidale post-primary schools.

The questionnaire was first sent to five private schools in South Australia, and replies were received from three of these. As the questionnaire seemed satisfactory, it was sent to thirty-three post-primary schools in New South Wales, both private and State, and also to one primary school attended by a number of ex-correspondence pupils who were billeted in hostels. In all, reports on, or from, fifty-five children were received from fifteen New South Wales schools; six of these pupils, though attending a New South Wales high school, seem to have attended the Queensland primary correspondence school. Three or four questionnaires were sent to each school (depending on its size) and head teachers were asked to select the pupils who had been longest in the correspondence school.

The inquiry took two forms.

1. Teachers were asked to rate the child on a three-point scale on a few aspects of personality and attainment.

2. Pupils were asked to provide details of their previous schooling and to state briefly their views on the correspondence system.

Teachers were asked to rate a pupil A if he could be considered in the top one-sixth of his class in that trait and C if he were in the bottom one-sixth; average pupils were to be rated B. It was pointed out that in a large school with parallel classes grouped by ability more of the brightest group would receive an A, and more of the dullest group would receive a C. In some schools there seemed a tendency for A ratings to be used rather freely, and the following results should be interpreted in the light of the usual findings that teachers' ratings tend to be high, and that few low ratings are used.

In interpreting the following results it must be remembered that they are from a select group. Only four of the thirty I.Q.'s supplied by the schools were under 100 and the average was 112. This failure of duller pupils to continue into high schools is common in all States. These pupils are also selected on the basis of family income. Even in the towns and cities an invisible economic screening probably occurs; but if an outback child is attending a high school there is the extra cost of board and lodging; if he attends a private school the cost is higher still. In one-half of the cases the teachers estimated the family income as being over £900 per annum and in no case was it below £350 per annum. Accordingly, the following results compare the results of superior children with other superior children, and do not touch the achievements of duller children or those from poorer homes.

The Opinions of Teachers: More than one-half of the pupils were ranked A for general health and only two children were ranked C. The proportions were similar in both States, and for State and private schools.

Teachers were asked to rate pupils on their present standard of handwriting and on their previous training in English and Arithmetic. On each ability from one-quarter to one-third of pupils were rated A and less than one-sixth were rated C. The number of A ratings was greater than could be expected by chance, and even if some allowance be made for generous ratings by the teachers it seems that the performance in these subjects is at least no worse than those of pupils in ordinary schools.

Teachers were also asked to rate pupils for shyness-confidence, perseverance, and the extent to which the child mixed with others and made friends. There was general agreement that former correspondence pupils were persevering and that they were average in their ability to mix easily with other pupils; but the State schools reported a higher percentage of shy pupils than did the private schools. In the Uralla investigation it was concluded that shyness and lack of poise were due to the home training and experience of the pupil. Those in the private schools came from wealthier homes, possibly had more opportunities of mixing with others, and possibly had parents with a wider background of experience.

A number of teachers wrote comments on individual pupils. Two comments were common: teachers noted that many ex-correspondence pupils who had been shy at first later gained confidence and began to mix more with other children. Usually this change was reported to take several years at least; a

common observation was the relative slowness of the correspondence pupil at first. However, there was also general agreement that after several months they were able to keep pace with other children, depending, of course, on their general ability.

Other teachers commented on different aspects. A New South Wales high school teacher wrote:

Correspondence pupils, on the average, do not suffer in comparison with others, either in scholastic attainment or in adjusted personality. Often their work exhibits greater thoroughness.

The headmistress of a private boarding school for girls, a school with over ninety girls who had begun their education by correspondence, wrote:

Correspondence school pupils are capable workers and have reached a good standard in written composition. They are often weak in oral reading and in spelling. The children often have not learned to work to time and are slower than other children who have worked in a class.

A number of girls entering this school have been handicapped because they had not been enrolled with the correspondence school at the usual age. Frequently girls had to be placed two years below their proper grade.

The Opinions of Pupils: In addition to giving opinions, pupils were asked to provide some details of their school careers. Of the sixty-four pupils, twenty-seven said they had spent two years in one grade and two had repeated two grades. Thirteen pupils had spent two years in one correspondence school grade¹ and others had either repeated a grade in the ordinary school or were retarded after transfer. This sample is too small for definite conclusions to be drawn; but since the pupils concerned are, in the main, those with the ability to proceed to high school, the percentage of duller pupils who are unable to complete all grades in the minimum time is probably greater. Despite the smallness of the sample, these figures give cause to treat cautiously any claim that retardation percentages are low; but they may be no higher than in ordinary schools.

If they had more than four pupils, head teachers were asked to select those who had been in the correspondence school for

¹ There is no means of checking the accuracy of these statements which contrast with the usual claims of normal progress and an absence of retardation in correspondence schools. The attempt to trace these thirteen cases at Blackfriars was unsuccessful. These pupils may have missed work through illness, or have taken more than twelve months to complete a year's work for several years in succession, and later come to believe that they had spent two years in one grade. Only if pupils had been very irregular in returning assignments would they have been likely to spend two years in one grade.

the longest periods. As the average period in the correspondence school was over four years, this seems to have been done.

Pupils were asked which subjects they thought the correspondence school taught best and which subjects were worst taught, or, alternatively, which subjects they found easiest and which hardest when they went to another school. Subjects were named more frequently as being well taught than badly taught, but no subject was outstandingly favoured in either group.

Pupils were asked how often they had listened to the school broadcasts. In both State and private schools about one-half of all pupils had listened regularly to the broadcasts and the other half listened rarely, if at all.

The pupils' comments on the advantages and disadvantages of the correspondence school were many and varied, but several comments recurred. Pupils pointed to the advantages of being able to live at home and to receive lessons without having to travel long distances to a school. Even more frequent were the references to the advantages of individual instruction and the relative lack of attention received as a member of a large class.

Some of the disadvantages were generally noted. The chief was lack of companionship and the loneliness of outback life. The competition in the classroom and the pleasures of school sport were mentioned by many. One pupil pointed to the fact that she had been unable "to get contagious diseases over in first year."

Many individual replies paid tribute to the work of the school. One lad aged seventeen who was in top place in the Leaving form wrote:

The correspondence school provided a good grounding for me because I was kept at it, and I also kept myself at it. However, had I not had constant supervision during the first year (when learning to read and write) I might have failed hopelessly. Unless a child is supervised rigorously from the start, correspondence is not effective. Only when he has learnt to help himself can this supervision be relaxed.

When I went to boarding school at the age of ten, I was slow for about a fortnight. After that I was able to work just as rapidly as the rest, but my writing quickly degenerated during that first year from careful neat "copy book" to its present state.

A girl, aged seventeen, who had been in the correspondence school for five and a half years and who is now gaining high marks in the Leaving class wrote:

Children who study through the correspondence school miss the companionship of their fellows and do not learn to mix with them. This is especially noticeable in the case of only children who live under such conditions that they rarely see any other children. It is advantageous to have someone with whom to compete in work and play.

What an indictment of the classroom method is contained in the following comments by different pupils.

An advantage of studying through the correspondence school is that things are explained to you individually and more time can be spent on your weak subjects

One can do the work in one's own time when studying by correspondence while in other schools the work has to be done in a certain set time. This means that a bright child can go ahead with his or her studies and does not have to wait for the rest of the class. In the same way a slow child does not have to struggle desperately to keep up with the remainder of the class.

Whether or not the standard of instruction through the correspondence schools is higher or lower than in ordinary schools the position of most students is summed up by the sixteen-year-old girl who wrote:

Most of the children in my district in north-west Queensland have ~~studied~~ studied through the correspondence school; if this had not been founded, what would these children have done? Probably they would not have had an education at all!

APPENDIX B

LOCATION OF CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

(The name of the head teacher or supervisor in 1948 is in brackets)

New South Wales

Correspondence School (Mr W Finglan),
Buckland Street,
Blackfriars,
Sydney.

Correspondence Teaching Division (Mr. H. Farr),
Sydney Technical College,
45-47 Broadway,
Sydney

Victoria

Correspondence School (Mr E. Pidgeon),
Napier Street,
Fitzroy,
Melbourne

Technical Correspondence School (Mr. A. Luxton),
150 Lonsdale Street,
Melbourne

Queensland

Primary Correspondence School (Mr W Zerner),
College Road,
Brisbane.

Department of Correspondence Tuition (Mr A Davies),
285 Edward Street,
Brisbane

Technical Correspondence School (Mr R. Turner),
150-160 Mary Street,
Brisbane.

South Australia

Correspondence School (Mr H Lushey, Miss N. Fitch),
Gilles Street,
Adelaide.

Technical Correspondence School (Mr M. Bone),
Exhibition Building,
Adelaide.

Western Australia

Correspondence Classes (Mr. C. Eakins),
9 Museum Street,
Perth.

Perth Technical College (Mr. Marshall),
St. George's Terrace,
Perth.

Tasmania

Correspondence School (Miss S. Sagasser),
Hobart.

Technical Correspondence School (Mr. W. Gibson),
94 Melville Street,
Hobart.

New Zealand

Correspondence School (Dr. A. G. Butchers),
Clifton Terrace,
Wellington.

